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THE CHOICE

By FREDERIC A. KUMMER

IN a dark corner of the veranda of the Edgemere Inn, Roger Wentworth, attorney, sat wrestling with two soul racking problems. All day they had risen persistently to the surface of his subconsciousness, though with perverse procrastination he had continually attempted to down them. In spite of these perhaps not entirely sincere attempts, they had refused, as is usually the case, to be downed, since, while the decisions he now knew himself called upon to make were decisions which he was distinctly disinclined to contemplate, because he knew they would not be to his liking, yet the subjects themselves were by no means distasteful to him, being, indeed, for the time at least, the very essence of his whole life and being.

The first problem concerned his material advancement. For some years in the enjoyment of a successful and fairly lucrative law practice, he had of late become more and more closely identified with the business affairs of a very large corporation, the president of which, Colonel Ashby Maxwell, had intrusted to him the planning of some of its most important ventures; ventures, indeed, in a legal sense, which involved all concerned in a complicated network of moves approaching more and more inevitably the limits of the law, and requiring correspondingly more and more exercise of legal acumen and agility to avoid disaster. That Colonel Maxwell looked to him to avoid such disaster he knew. Indeed, it was no fear of consequences which involved him in such profound self-analysis, but an honest and very real distaste for the work, a lack of respect

for himself with regard to certain methods, which was most unprofessional in a corporation lawyer whose large retainers were paid primarily in order that his clients might keep safely without the clutches of the law, though they approached it never so closely. And let it not be thought that Colonel Ashby Maxwell and his corporation were engaged in any shady, nefarious trade, in any mere catchpenny scheme of vice, whereby the unwary were relieved of their superfluous cash by either petty misrepresentation or belligerous assault. On the contrary, the corporation presided over by the Colonel and his able, though perhaps a trifle unscrupulous, board of directors, was most estimable, most highly spoken of in the aristocratic circles of high finance, and well recommended to prosperous investors, as well as to widows and orphans, from one end of the Street to the other. Yet Roger Wentworth did not like the work, although he knew it to be the work of most prominent lawyers, and the practice of most successful corporations. The watering and rewatering of stock, the violent and ruthless crushing of competition, the control of trust funds for private enterprises, the influencing of legislation, were as much a part of the daily routine of the affairs of his company as paying the wages of thirty thousand employees every other week, or the installation of a new power plant. And still Roger Wentworth did not like it. Perhaps it was because he came of rugged old Puritan stock, from which the rigid honesty that refused compromise with self and turned pitchforks against a king for the sake

of a principle had not been entirely eradicated by the rush of modern commercialism. Deep down in Roger Wentworth's soul, too, lay a great, overpowering ambition, an ambition to enter the political arena, as his grandfather had done before him, and serve the State for the State, and the people for the people, as the great patriot of '76 had served it.

This ambition he had mentioned to Colonel Maxwell during the course of a somewhat personal conversation a year and a half before, while cruising in the Gulf on the Colonel's yacht. He himself had forgotten the incident completely, but it seemed that Colonel Maxwell had not, since that very morning on the golf course he had referred to it in a way which had at first set Roger Wentworth's heart pounding in a most unusual manner indeed for one of his profession, and had left it in his boots. For the Colonel had informed him that he could and would get him the nomination, and the election as well, from his Congressional district for the coming fall elections, and that he had but to say the word to be as sure of his seat in the great white temple of the people at Washington as though he even now sat in it. But—and there was a "but," a "but," indeed, of very large proportions—there were the interests of the corporation. Not that the Colonel had been so unbusinesslike as to mention the matter of these interests during the conversation in question—the president of the Consolidated Metals Company was too good a business man for that—but Wentworth knew perfectly what had been the relations between that company and his predecessor in the before-mentioned seat in the great white temple, as well as with many others who sat therein, and he—well, there was the rub, the rub of the collar. Could he wear it? Would it not rub and wear and chafe until it ate into the bleeding sinews of his self-respect, raw, calloused, seared and never again to be free from that biting yoke? Even as these thoughts had dashed madly through his brain, he had smiled pleasan-

antly, thanked the Colonel for his offer, and agreed to consider it. The Colonel had smiled in return, informed him that he was going to Washington that night, and finally invited Wentworth to dine with him, which invitation the latter had declined on the grounds that he desired to consider the matter alone. The Colonel had raised his eyebrows slightly, wondered at such unnecessary legal formality between friends, suggested that Wentworth wire him at Washington as promptly as possible, and, evidently regarding the matter as entirely settled and disposed of, began a second nine holes with a mind wholly devoted to brassies, putters and cleeks.

Wentworth, dining alone, had thought hard, and now it was nearly eleven o'clock. The telegraph office in the hotel closed at eleven; of course he could readily put off his decision until tomorrow. But why procrastinate? The Colonel might take some action in the matter; it would clearly be better to send him a night message, which he would have by breakfast time in the morning. He would, he felt, give anything in the world, save his honor, to accept the offer. The desire for political distinction was an obsession with him; yet it seemed that honor, and honor alone, was the only price that the Consolidated Metals Company demanded of him, and this price he could not and would not pay. With this thought hot in his mind, he sprang from his chair, walked quickly the length of the veranda and entered the telegraph booth in the hotel lobby. Here he dashed off a telegram, tore it up, rewrote it and again tore it up, and finally sent the following message:

COLONEL ASHBY MAXWELL,
New Willard Hotel,
Washington, D. C.

Have decided not to accept offer this year.
R. H. WENTWORTH.

The "this year" was a loophole. It was characteristic of the lawyer—the legal instinct asserting itself. Then he went back to his seat in the corner of the veranda. There still remained the

second problem. He had left it to the last because it was the most difficult. The second problem was Mrs. Maxwell.

II

ROGER WENTWORTH had often wondered, in his more introspective moments, just when and how Mrs. Maxwell ever came to be a problem in his life at all. Three years ago he had never even seen her. Until the Southern cruise before mentioned he had met her but twice. On the white-decked *Isabel*, slipping along down the purple Gulf Stream, lazily watching the flying fish and the porpoises, picking up Miami and Jupiter Light and passing ships with the glass, watching together the amazing sunsets, she had seemed to enter into his heart unbidden, to abide there always, a guest whose welcome was only measured by his capacity to please; yet, apparently by a tacit consent, they had not made love by speaking of it—though their eyes gave each other mute assurance of the wonderful, the irradiating, the ever-present truth.

Isabel Maxwell was some twenty-eight years old at this time, the Colonel over sixty. They had been married nearly ten years, and were excellent friends. She had come from Virginia, her home, to Washington for her debut, and during her first winter in society the Colonel, who divided his time between New York and Washington, and knew everyone, in due course met her. He was a widower, childless, lonely in the sense that a man is lonely who has been accustomed to find someone at home besides the servants when he goes there, and who suddenly finds the servants only. He missed something out of his life; his club had begun to bore him; he looked upon Miss Cameron and she satisfied his critical taste. He did not try to convince her that he was in love with her, for he knew women and the futility of essaying a role in which hundreds of younger men with a thousandth part of his income could easily best him; so he naturally fell back upon

his never-failing weapon in all emergencies, money. He dazzled Isabel with his presents, his entertainments, and, what was more to the purpose, dazzled her mother, long ago grown thin-lipped from an incessant struggle to keep up appearances on an income which steadily decreased in proportion to the decrease in the rates of interest upon such investments as were permitted by the courts for her small entailed estate. Therefore it naturally followed that Isabel Cameron, after a three months' plunge into Washington society, had, in response to her mother's pleadings, consented to become Mrs. Ashby Maxwell, and had ever since been finding out how much and how little money will buy. Even for her mother's sake, she had often thought, she would not do it over again, nor, indeed, could that necessity ever arise, for her mother, after seven years of happiness and relief from her struggle with comparative poverty, lay sleeping in the little country churchyard which had claimed most of the Camerons, save those who lay on the field of battle, for nearly two centuries. What a sublimity of selfishness, after all, is sometimes to be found in that most truly unselfish of all human affections, maternal love!

Because of these things it happened that Isabel Maxwell had never really loved any man until she met Roger Wentworth, and to him, after ten years of loveless soul solitude, she brought all the unspoiled, joyous affection of a girl of eighteen. For ten years her emotions had stood still. Like a long imprisoned avalanche, they swept down now with a force which seemed likely to carry everything before it.

Until the preceding week no word of love had passed between these two, so lightly walking the edge of the precipice. The avowal came at last in this way. They had been motoring, Mrs. Maxwell, the Colonel and Wentworth, in the latter's car, which on this occasion, as was frequently the case, he drove himself. The Colonel had an appointment with some friends of the financial world at the Inn at four, and they had left him there, with the un-

derstanding that they would run down to the lighthouse on the Point, back along the inland road through the village and reach the Inn again in time to pick him up for dinner. They had often made the trip together, and, but for one of those deft touches by which Fate sets her hidden machinery in motion, this occasion would probably not have differed in any wise from the others. That it did vitally changed the courses of several lives.

They had left the Point and were nearing the village on the road leading back to the pier, when suddenly they came to the railroad crossing. Wentworth knew of its existence, but he was absorbed in Isabel's account of some of her childhood experiences and did not hear the train until he found himself directly in front of it. See it he could not, because of the trees, the embankment and the curve. It was a miracle that they got across—there seemed not the breadth of a hand to spare. Safely across, Wentworth gazed fleetingly at his companion, then brought the car to a stop. Mrs. Maxwell had fainted. Gently, very gently, he took one of her hands, now lying limp in her lap, and, with masculine ignorance of the proper thing to do, began to fan her with his cap. Isabel slowly opened her eyes, felt the pressure of his hand, saw him bending over her, then threw her other arm about his neck and sobbed out brokenly, "Roger, oh, my dear, my dear, my dear!" then kissed him. That was all, but when they came back to the Inn and took the Colonel off to the cottage, they knew that now they could never again go back. Mrs. Maxwell had become the greatest problem of Roger Wentworth's life.

The following week had been one of incomparable joy and of unspeakable self-degradation for both. Mrs. Maxwell, though she did not love her husband, respected him and honored his name. To Wentworth he was adviser, benefactor, friend. He had eaten his salt, and he was too honorable a man, as she was too honorable a woman, to be willing to carry on, under her hus-

band's very nose, a *liaison* which could have no other termination than the divorce courts. Yet, now that the walls of convention were down, the floodgates passionately burst asunder, it was humanly impossible for these two young and vital beings to meet alone, to stroll through the salt marshes, to drive along the rhododendron walled forest roads, without being thrown into each other's arms by a force far stronger and older than any of the man-devised rules of society which should have kept them apart. They had done their best to avoid it, yet three times, within the past week, they had been so situated, and three times had they returned to the cottage with a searing sense of shame upon them which robbed them of all peace of mind and soul and left them stranded upon the rocks of self-abasement. It was because of this that Wentworth, on this particular Sunday evening, had refused to take dinner at the cottage, as had been, until now, his almost invariable habit, and had dined alone with his two problems. He knew, when he took his dark and lonely seat in the corner of the veranda, that before he left it those two problems would be settled in the only way which was open to him to settle them. The first he had now disposed of. The second he determined to solve with equal promptness, lest his resolution fail him. He went into the hotel lobby again, this time into the writing room. Mrs. Maxwell he determined not to see again alone. He would return to town in the morning. He wrote and rewrote for half an hour before he felt satisfied with the result, then, placing the letter in an envelope, he hurriedly left the hotel and started up the beach road toward the Maxwells' cottage. Wentworth had at first intended to send the note by a boy from the hotel, but the beauty of the June night, the love of fresh air and an excessive nervousness which precluded sleep, all combined to drive him out into the open. He determined to deliver the note himself and leave it with one of the servants; perhaps, indeed, had Roger Wentworth been willing to admit it to his practical

legal mind, he desired, as might the veriest lovesick swain, to stand in the moonlight and gaze up at the window behind which he might imagine, in all her sweet loveliness, slept his heart's desire.

He set off up the road briskly. It was close to midnight when he approached the stone gateway of Shadow Lawn, and just as he had nearly reached it a limousine car swept out into the highway. As he stepped to the side of the road to avoid it, he recognized the Maxwells' chauffeur. The car was going at full speed in the direction of the village, and it was evident that the president of the Consolidated Metals Company was late, and very likely, unless he hurried, to miss his train.

Wentworth entered the gateway and approached the house. It was still brilliantly illuminated, and through the open French windows of the library streamed out a broad shaft of light upon the veranda and lawn, indicating that the room was still occupied. Perhaps it was the Colonel's nephew, young Robert Maxwell, although he would be more likely to have gone to the station with his uncle. He mounted the broad veranda steps, and, moving slightly to one side, gazed through the open window. His heart gave a great throb and his breath caught painfully as he recognized the occupant of the room. It was Mrs. Maxwell, sitting at an escritoire, writing.

III

THE library at Shadow Lawn Cottage was a large and very beautiful room, richly furnished in Circassian walnut. At one side it opened into a reception room, at the other into an entrance hall. At half past eleven, on the night of the events of the preceding chapter, Burton, Maxwell's butler, entered the library with a heavy English kit bag, a small satchel and a bundle of umbrellas and canes strapped about with a rug. These articles he deposited upon the floor near the doorway leading into the hall, after which he fumbled

in his pockets and finally produced an envelope containing a ticket and some checks, which he proceeded to examine carefully. As he did so, Robert Maxwell, the Colonel's nephew, and also his secretary, entered the room. Robert Maxwell was one of those men to describe whom is almost inevitably to do them either more than justice or less. He appeared a well set up, clean-limbed young fellow, handsome in a youthful way, with clear, dark eyes and hair, smooth shaven and ruddy brown with health. Beyond this exterior, pleasing enough indeed, lay the real Robert Maxwell, and to express the lurking shifts of those dark eyes, the occasional hard lines of expression about the mouth, the sudden turn of the head—these, after all, are intangible things, to be felt and experienced rather than described.

"I see you have the tickets, Burton. I hope you made no mistake—the Washington Express. Is the car outside? Is everything packed?"

"Yes, sir. Everything, sir."

"You put in the medicine and the flask of whisky?"

"Yes, sir; everything is ready, sir. Is Mr. Maxwell feeling better, sir?"

"Pretty well, Burton, after that attack this afternoon. It's the first in years—you know we thought his old trouble had disappeared. But you never can tell what will happen at his age." Robert's gaze wandered covetously about the richly furnished room.

"Too bad, sir, that he has to make this trip, and alone, too."

"Yes, but business is business, you know, Burton; and the Colonel never neglects *that*, as I know very well."

As he spoke, Colonel and Mrs. Maxwell entered the room. In spite of her pain-lined face, evidences of great inward suffering, Isabel Maxwell was a woman of distinguished beauty. Slightly taller than the average, the soft, full lines of her exquisite figure made one realize that during her long period of emotional inactivity she had apparently remained physically equally as inactive, for her form was almost girlish in its lines. She came into the

room with a gracious, yet somewhat tired manner, and stood near the writing desk, her eyes resting anxiously upon the face of her husband.

"Well, Robert," said the Colonel in his usual cheery voice, as he looked at his watch, "it's time we were going. Is the car outside?"

"Everything is ready, sir." Robert glanced from him to Mrs. Maxwell with a curious expression of triumph.

Colonel Maxwell advanced to his wife and extended his hand. "Well, my dear," he said, "I'm sorry to leave you alone."

Mrs. Maxwell smiled slightly. "I'll get along very well, with Mrs. Chatterton and—and Robert," she replied. "Don't hurry back. Remember that you are not feeling as well as usual."

"Unfortunately, Isabel, it requires no effort on my part to remember that." The Colonel's smile was a trifle grim. "If it were not for the dispute about this concession— But the representatives of the Mexican interests cannot wait."

"You mean the San Pedro mines," interjected Robert.

The Colonel turned. "Yes, Robert. If I succeed with them while in Washington the matter will be finally settled. If not, I—or you—may be obliged to go down there."

"I?" Robert's tone was full of unpleasant surprise.

"Certainly. Why not? It would be a splendid trip for you; you might have to spend the winter there."

"New York is good enough for me," remarked Robert with finality.

Mrs. Maxwell looked at him with but faintly veiled dislike. "It's work for a young man, Robert. Your uncle could not very well go."

"Nonsense. I'm a young man yet." The Colonel straightened himself up stiffly. "I feel as young as ever—except, perhaps, Isabel, when I look at you," he concluded, glancing fondly at his young wife.

She laughed. "You mustn't say such things, Ashby. You are the best preserved man of your age that I know."

"Preserved! Good heavens, Isabel! Anyone might think you were speaking of a—a—dried fish or something of the sort." He drew a cigar from his pocket and lighted it nervously.

"Don't be absurd, Ashby; you know what I mean. You had better hurry along now or you may miss your train."

The Colonel consulted his watch. "By Jove, you're right. Well, good-bye, my dear. I hope you won't be lonesome. There's Wentworth to take you about while I'm away." He did not observe the sudden flush that rose to his wife's quivering face.

"Mr. Wentworth is always very attentive," she remarked coldly.

"So I've observed," replied the Colonel. "But he's a splendid fellow, my dear, and you know I'm very fond of him. A coming man—there's no doubt about that. The brainiest corporation lawyer in the country. He has a great career ahead of him. I'm glad you like him."

"Everyone does, I think." Mrs. Maxwell's tone was uninterested.

"That's true. Well, I must be going." He drew her to him and kissed her on the cheek. "Good-bye." He turned to the door. "All right, Burton. You'd best hurry; I'm a bit late. Will you come with me, Robert? Suit yourself; you know there's no necessity." He passed out into the hall, followed by Robert and Burton with the baggage. Mrs. Maxwell followed them to the doorway, then returned to the room and stood gazing fixedly at the dome lamp over the desk, thinking deeply. Suddenly she dropped wearily into the chair, selected a pen and paper and began to write. She had written but a few lines when Robert reentered the room. "Well, thank the Lord that's over!" he said as he came in.

Mrs. Maxwell looked up in surprise and dropped her pen. "Why, Robert!" she cried. "I thought you had gone to the station with your uncle."

"Oh, well, uncle didn't care particularly about it, and neither did I. I wanted to be here with you."

"You shouldn't say such things, Robert." Mrs. Maxwell's tone was not encouraging. "He is very kind to you, and you should love him for it."

"Well, he's very kind to you, too. Do you love him for it?"

Mrs. Maxwell rose, her face blazing with anger. "What do you mean by saying such things to me? What do you mean?" she cried.

"You know what I mean, Isabel." Robert's smile developed unpleasant lines about the corners of his mouth. "I've told you often enough. Of course you love uncle, but not in the way you are capable of loving someone. He's a nice old gentleman—old enough to be your father." He advanced toward the desk which Mrs. Maxwell had just left. She turned away coldly.

"I don't care to listen to such things. You have no right—"

"Isabel! Isabel!" he cried, his voice eager with suppressed feeling. "Don't put me off that way! You know I mean no disrespect to Uncle Ashby. I'm very fond of him, but"—he stepped nearer to the desk and to her—"you are the only person I love in the whole world. Can't you see that—every day I love you more? Give me a word of hope, won't you, Isabel?"

"Don't say such things to me, Robert," said Mrs. Maxwell with a catch of a sob in her voice. "Please don't—don't ever mention the subject again. You insult me. Have you no sense of right, of honor?"

The hard lines about Robert's mouth deepened, and his eyes blazed angrily, defiantly. "You wouldn't say that to Wentworth!" he blazed out.

"How dare you!" The sob in Mrs. Maxwell's voice was gone now. She was a picture of anger, her face white with passion. "How dare you speak to me in that way? Mr. Wentworth is at least a gentleman!"

"Love sometimes makes a man forget even that. I love you—madly—with all my soul. Don't you understand? Do you treat me in this way because you do not care for me and are making a virtue of your lack of

inclination?" He leaned against the desk, his face contorted with angry jealousy.

Mrs. Maxwell recovered herself. She looked at him scornfully. "You are quite right," she said in a coldly disdainful voice. "I do not care for you in the least, as I have already told you several times. Under any circumstances your attentions are an insult, both to me and to your uncle. Go away, please; I am tired." She turned toward the desk, but he remained immovable before it.

"I suppose you want me to go so you'll have a chance to finish that letter to Wentworth," he sneered.

"What letter?" said Mrs. Maxwell in sudden surprise.

Robert turned and glanced at the unfinished note lying upon the desk, then turned to her with a leer of triumph. "That," he said, and pointed toward it.

She glanced at the desk with a quick frown. "Yes, I do wish to finish it," she replied in a colorless voice. "What of it? I have a perfect right to write to Mr. Wentworth if I wish."

"And to drive with him every day, and golf with him and go about with him constantly—of course."

"Certainly. We are very good friends. If your uncle does not object, I fail to see your right to do so. And now—go away, please; the conversation bores me." She turned from him and picked up the unfinished letter from the desk.

Robert moved sulkily toward the door, his face full of sullen wrath. "All right," he flung at her, as he left the room, "but you'd better be careful, that's all."

Mrs. Maxwell looked after him with a long, preoccupied gaze. "Be careful," she murmured bitterly. "God knows I have been, though it has broken my heart." She sank into the desk chair and stared dully at the half-finished letter before her. She was ready to cry out hysterically, from sheer weariness of soul. Her husband's sudden attack of a long-forgotten heart weakness—Wentworth's refusal to dine

—Robert's insults—the decision she, like Wentworth, had all day been trying to make—all had broken down her nervous strength; she rested her head upon her arms and sobbed drearily. Presently she looked up, took the unfinished note and read it over to herself:

DEAR ROGER:

The love that is in my heart I must not say; yet, because there is nothing else there—I cannot write from my heart, but only what my mind tells me—we must not see each other again. Could I but write what I feel—

She broke into a sob as she reached the end. "If I only could! If I only could!" she cried, and the unchecked tears coursed slowly down her white cheeks and fell in little drops upon the letter as she held it in her hand. Suddenly she brushed her hand across her eyes, seized a pen and finished the letter abruptly:

—but my duty tells me that this is the only way. Good-bye, and may God bless you and watch over you always.

She sealed the letter, kissed it, sobbing softly, rose and walked rapidly toward the door. As she passed the open French window she stopped and, breathing deep breaths of the sweet June air, gazed out into the peaceful, moonlit night. "Roger, Roger, my love, my love!" she cried softly to herself, and even as she spoke his arms were about her, and he was showering her tear-stained face with a rain of passionate kisses.

IV

THERE is a story of an Eastern pasha who was warned by an astrologer that the Angel of Death would appear before him on a certain night at Damascus, on the occasion of a grand *levée* given by the Sultan. Perceiving the Angel of Death among the gathering crowd, the pasha set out by caravan to Bagdad, hoping thus to escape his fate. As he entered the Gate of the Merchants, disguised as a dealer in rugs, the Angel of Death stepped before

him, saying "Come!" "But I thought you were to meet me in Damascus," replied the pasha in dismay. "Not so," replied the Angel of Death. "I but appeared there, that you might meet me here tonight, as it was written." "Kismet," replied the pasha, and fell from his horse, dead.

When Fate apparently goes out of her way to bring to naught the good intentions of humanity, we are led to wonder whether, indeed, the Oriental idea may not, after all, approach the truth. These two strong souls, who had all day struggled with their hearts' desire, and had, each unknown to the other, resolved upon the only course open to them with honor, by some strange and inexplicable circumstance, now found themselves more deeply involved than ever. The very act of renunciation on the part of each, the drawing back, as it were, left them like bows drawn to the arrowhead, like magnets, suddenly separated, immeasurably more ready to fly toward each other than before. Wentworth, after his day of stress, Mrs. Maxwell, worn out and heartsick for the love and consolation that he alone could give her—what convention could now prevent them from yielding to the inevitable? She drew him gently into the room, realizing that their figures, silhouetted by the light within, would be only too apparent to any chance passer along the nearby road; then held out the letter with a tired smile. "Here is a letter I have just written you," she said.

Wentworth in turn drew from his pocket the note he had written. "Here is one I came to leave for you," he said quietly. "That is why I am here."

"Oh," she said softly, "I wondered;" and taking the letter thrust it into her bosom.

"I might have sent it. But I couldn't sleep—something drew me to you—I thought I would bring it myself. Aren't you going to read it?" he inquired, taking her hand.

She laughed mirthlessly. "Now that you are here you can tell me what is in it. Besides, you haven't read mine, either."

"It can wait," he said simply, and put it into his pocket.

Mrs. Maxwell looked at him, and a strange fear entered her heart. Roger Wentworth, the self-contained, well-poised lawyer, was gone; before her stood the naked soul of the man, burning with passionate, desperate love. His hand was hot as it clasped her cold fingers; his eyes were luminous with love and desire. His compelling gaze made her shiver slightly, she hardly knew why. She retreated a step. "Read it," she said; "read it—now."

Never had she been alone with him thus, at night, a June night, under the moon. She feared equally to have him approach her or leave her and go away. She knew she could accomplish either result with a word, yet, womanlike, she waited for him to make the next move—a move which she would probably oppose, whatever it was.

Wentworth drew himself together sharply. "Very well," he said, and going to the lamp, he drew the letter from his pocket and read it through silently. A fleeting expression of pain swept over his face; then he turned to her. "You are right," he said. "I wrote you the same thing."

It is a curious fact that the best intentioned, the most moral of women, are yet sufficiently elemental to have within them, to a greater or less degree, the Dianalike instinct of the huntress. Isabel Maxwell, renouncing Roger Wentworth, was a good woman, doing her duty as her sense of honor pointed it out to her. Isabel Maxwell, renounced by Roger Wentworth, was, somehow, not quite the same; the instinctive desire to hold him asserted itself. "Roger, my love—good-bye," she said, and held out her arms to him.

Wentworth threw the letter on the desk, and stepping quickly forward, crushed her passionately to his heart. "My dear, my dear," he cried, "I love you so! I love you so!" He kissed her; he pressed her to him, and in his encircling arms she rested, happy, gloriously happy, returning him kiss for kiss, forgetting the wrong of it, forgetting her determination of the hour

before, forgetting everything but that he loved her and she him, and that she was tired, tired, and had found rest and peace. They sank upon a divan near the window, with their lips and hearts together, oblivious to all about them, lost in a madness of love. Hence they did not hear the automobile, as it slowly drew up under the porte-cochère, nor the opening of the door, nor realize Colonel Maxwell's approach until he had already entered the room.

V

COLONEL MAXWELL's limousine car, for the first time since he had owned it, developed an inexplicable irritability, which, while not enough to impede its progress greatly, was still sufficient to cause its owner, already late, to miss his train. Thus another deft touch by Fate to the drama she was so rapidly developing. Swearing under his breath, the Colonel ordered his man to return to the cottage, after sending a night wire to Washington from the depot telegraph office explaining his delay. The progress back was made in gloomy silence; the Colonel was in a frightful humor. Stepping quickly from the car, he mounted the veranda steps, opened the door and flung himself angrily through the hall and into the library. For the moment his eyes were dazzled by the light, after the darkness without. "Confound that machine!" he growled. "I wouldn't have missed that train for a thousand dollars!" As he spoke, he turned, and his amazed eyes fell upon the figures of Mrs. Maxwell and Wentworth as they rose suddenly and in confusion from the couch.

"My—God!" he gasped faintly, as he fell back and leaned against the door frame for support. Then his eyes took in Mrs. Maxwell's burning countenance and somewhat disheveled hair. "You devil!" he whispered softly. "You devil!" he repeated, and looked at her with the bitter hatred of the outraged property owner.

Wentworth took a step forward. "Colonel Maxwell—" he began.

"Be quiet!" roared the Colonel in a voice of thunder.

"Ashby—Ashby—don't act hastily!" Mrs. Maxwell faced the situation fearlessly. "Let me explain."

"I could hardly act more hastily than you have, madam." Colonel Maxwell's tone was full of biting sarcasm. "I have not been out of the house half an hour; yet I find you in your lover's arms. You lost no time, madam, that is evident."

"Let me explain," Wentworth began.

"Is it necessary for you to explain the evidence of my own eyes?"

"The fault is mine. Mrs. Maxwell is entirely innocent."

"Innocent!" roared the Colonel. "Innocent! When she admits you to my house at this hour of the night? What the devil would you call being guilty, sir?"

"I came without her knowledge," Wentworth explained.

"You cur!" said the Colonel. "And I thought you my friend." He strode excitedly up and down the room. Suddenly his eye caught Mrs. Maxwell's note, which Wentworth had thrown upon the desk. He picked it up. "Dear Roger," he read aloud, "the love that is in my heart I must not say." Ugh!" He shuddered and threw the letter from him, trembling with rage.

"Sir, by what right—" began Wentworth angrily.

"Roger, don't!" cried Mrs. Maxwell.

The Colonel turned furiously upon them. "Liars—both of you! A well-matched pair!" His face was livid.

"Sir, be careful!" said Wentworth. "I do not propose—"

"That to me?" gasped the Colonel in uncontrollable fury. He seized a small pearl-handled revolver from the desk. "By the living God, I'll kill you both!"

Wentworth rushed toward him. "For God's sake, man," he cried, "what are you going to do? Think of your wife's name!"

"Think of her name!" The Colonel's voice trembled slightly. "You hound, did either of you think of

mine?" He raised the pistol and pointed it at his wife.

Wentworth seized his arm. "You cannot mean—" he began excitedly.

"Back! You come next." Colonel Maxwell shifted the revolver until it covered Wentworth's heart.

"Don't!" His wife sprang between them with a cry. "Before God, I have been true to you! But—I love him." She clung to her husband's arm. "I love him."

"Then die for him!" Colonel Maxwell shook her off and turned the revolver upon her, his finger upon the trigger; he was capable of anything, so beside himself was he with fury.

"Oh!" Mrs. Maxwell cowered before the mouth of the weapon. "Don't! You must listen to me!"

With a rush Wentworth sprang upon him and grasped his wrist in his powerful hand. "You are mad!" he cried. "Drop that pistol—do you hear?" He crushed the Colonel's hand savagely until the bones cracked.

"Let go my hand, you cur!" Colonel Maxwell struggled in vain to free himself.

"You must not! You are mad!" Wentworth cried. Then suddenly he felt the Colonel's arm become quite limp; the revolver fell clattering to the floor, and as he released his hold upon his adversary's wrist the latter clutched wildly at his throat and seemed to be choking. Wentworth drew back and gazed at him in alarm.

"Quick, Roger, it's his heart!" he heard Mrs. Maxwell cry, but even before she had finished, the form of her husband lay huddled upon the Bokhara rug, a pitiful inanimate figure.

Wentworth approached the prostrate figure, his face like marble, and bending over, placed his hand upon Colonel Maxwell's heart. "It's no use," he exclaimed, with an expression of horror, as he rose.

"What do you mean?" cried Mrs. Maxwell, with wide, staring eyes. "Do you mean that—that—" She hesitated.

"He is dead," said Wentworth dully.

"No—no—no!" She covered her face with her hands and sobbed.

"He is dead," repeated Wentworth. "How terrible!" He had not seen death so close at hand before. "What shall we do?"

Mrs. Maxwell took her hands from her face and looked at him. "Go—go quickly." She pointed to the window.

"But I can't leave you like this," he began brokenly.

"Quick—quick! You must go—at once, don't you see?"

"But you," he said, "alone—"

"Roger, Roger," she moaned, "why won't you go? They are coming. I hear voices."

"I can't—I—"

"Don't you see that you must?" she cried, as she took his arm and urged him toward the still open window. "For my sake, and for your own, go—quickly."

"My God, what a terrible thing!" groaned Wentworth, as he approached the window. "It seems so cowardly to leave you."

"Go—go," she whispered. "I hear them coming. Good-bye." She fairly pushed him through the window, closed it and threw herself upon her knees beside her husband's body, calling loudly, "Robert! Burton! Help—quick!"

The sudden entrance of Robert surprised her. It seemed that he appeared from nowhere, even as she spoke. She looked at him closely, but his face betrayed no sign. He rushed to her side. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"Your uncle has had another shock," said Mrs. Maxwell, futilely chafing the already cold hand which she held in hers.

"What kind of a shock?" asked Robert meaningly, as he picked up the revolver from the floor and replaced it upon the desk.

She glanced at him in alarm, but before she could say anything, Mrs. Chatterton, a widow of uncertain age, who was visiting them, rushed in, scantily clad. "Isabel, Isabel," she cried, "what is it?" then stopped in horror as she beheld the figure lying still and cold upon the rug. She was followed by Burton, who quickly approached the

body and raised the head. "The whisky, Mr. Robert!" he said. "Quick!"

"It's too late, Burton," said Robert quietly. "Colonel Maxwell is dead."

Again Isabel glanced at him. He had not examined the body of his uncle. His ready assurance to Burton that he was dead surprised and alarmed her; coupled with his other remark, it lead up to a most unpleasant conclusion. Again Mrs. Chatterton broke in. "How strange!" she said. "I thought he had gone to the train."

"He missed it," explained Mrs. Maxwell, rising wearily.

"But what has happened? What sudden shock—"

Mrs. Maxwell pushed her aside irritably and walked toward the desk. "Oh, don't—don't! I don't know. Go away." She sank into the desk chair and, seeing her note to Wentworth lying upon the desk, picked it up and began nervously to tear it into small bits, which she dropped in a white shower into the waste basket.

"He'd been feeling badly all the afternoon, ma'am," said Burton by way of explanation.

Robert again looked covertly at Mrs. Maxwell. "Something must have affected his—heart," he said quietly.

"It's terrible—terrible! My poor Isabel!" Mrs. Chatterton went up to the desolate figure in the desk chair and placed her hand on Isabel's head, stroking her loosened hair. "Hadn't someone better go for the doctor?"

"It's too late, too late," sobbed Mrs. Maxwell hysterically.

"He must be sent for, anyhow; Burton, telephone for Dr. Williams. And give me a hand here; we had better put him on the couch." Robert stooped, and with the assistance of Burton raised the body of the dead man and placed it on the divan. Observing them, Isabel rose from her chair and, with staring eyes, pointed a trembling hand at the figure of her husband. "Oh, no, not there!" she shrieked, then swayed and would have fallen, had not Mrs. Chatterton caught her in her arms.

"Isabel, my poor girl," cried the lat-

ter, supporting the figure which rested so limply against hers, "you are overcome; this has been too much for you." She put her arm about Mrs. Maxwell's waist.

Isabel straightened herself with an effort and stood alone. "I must go," she said, then swayed again, and, realizing her weakness, cried, with her face contorted with horror: "For God's sake, Sallie, take me away! I can stand no more! I have killed him—I have killed him!" With a terrible cry she sank unconscious into Mrs. Chatterton's arms.

"Poor child, she's hysterical," said Mrs. Chatterton, as, with the assistance of Burton, she began to carry the fainting woman from the room.

"Anybody can see that," remarked Robert—"if no more."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Chatterton, turning quickly.

"Nothing," said Robert shortly, as he stepped to the telephone.

VI

FOR six weeks Isabel Maxwell lay ill, and for a time very near death's door. Roger Wentworth, although informed daily of her condition, returned to New York as soon as she was pronounced out of danger and buried himself in his work. Robert Maxwell, because of his great familiarity with his uncle's affairs, was dispatched to Mexico to look after Mrs. Maxwell's interests in a silver mining concession, the San Pedro mines, a personal venture of Colonel Maxwell's, into which he had gone shortly before his death. A long dispute as to the boundaries of the property had ensued; the matter was thrown into the Mexican courts, and Robert Maxwell seemed in a fair way to spend the winter there.

Meanwhile, Isabel, rising from her sick bed but a shadow of her former beautiful self, had closed her cottage, and, with Mrs. Chatterton as her sole companion, had departed for Europe, after a stay in New York only sufficiently long to enable her to attend to

those business affairs which the death of her husband made imperative. She had met Wentworth a number of times during this brief stay in the city, especially since he was one of the executors of her husband's will, but he had not intruded himself upon her retirement more than the necessities of the occasion required, and, like herself, seemed to feel that until time had effaced the memory of that terrible night, love, between them, was a thing of which it was best they should not speak. She left him, a pathetic figure in black, leaning over the vessel's rail, with the great bunch of violets he had sent to the steamer clasped in her arms. To his loving gaze she seemed more than ever a child; her long illness had left her white and thin. He had kissed her hand in parting, and with a brave show of unconcern had wished her *bon voyage* and a safe return the following year. Then he brushed the unbidden tears from his eyes, for he loved her very deeply, this silent, brooding man, and went back to his work.

For Wentworth this work developed unexpected possibilities. As soon as Colonel Maxwell's successor to the presidency of the Consolidated Metals Company had been chosen, Wentworth had resigned as the company's attorney, a resignation made the easier by the fact that Colonel Maxwell's successor had a nephew, who was, like himself, a prominent corporation lawyer and a member of one of the most successful law firms in the city. It required but a few weeks to turn over to him the work he had under way, after which he settled back to his general practice with a sigh almost of relief. He desired to eliminate from his life as completely as possible everything that could remind him of the past. Although he could not entirely blame himself for Colonel Maxwell's death, he yet felt that, but for his presence at the cottage that night, it would not have occurred, and to a sensitive man, such as he was, this thought was not one to be lightly put out of mind.

With the bee of political aspirations continually buzzing in his bonnet, he

was fortunate enough to be thrown, by reason of some important land condemnation proceedings, into intimate relationship with a number of men prominent in city and State politics, and especially in the reform movement, then gaining such strength. The prosecution of certain particularly brazen cases of corporation mismanagement and irregularities in banking and trust company affairs resulted in his being selected as the attorney for an investigating committee appointed by the Governor. Their probing of the alleged scandals was so brilliantly conducted by their able counsel that he found himself famous overnight. Already his name was mentioned as a promising candidate for the office of District Attorney, and several scholarly addresses before the Municipal Reform Association and elsewhere resulted in his being definitely approached toward the end of the winter by the leaders of the movement, with a view to sounding him as to his willingness to accept such office, could the nomination be secured. To these gentlemen he made clear his political aspirations and his willingness to work heart and soul for the cause of municipal reform in whatever capacity they might see fit to place him.

He clearly understood the odds against which they must contend, the necessity for giving his time, day and night, to a comprehensive series of personal appeals direct to the people, the voters, without whom they could not hope for even a chance of success. He laid bare his past life, and indicated the origin of his reasons for his withdrawal from the service of the Consolidated Metals Company. His brilliant record in the trust company investigation sufficiently answered any charges of former corporation affiliations which his opponents might bring up against him, and it was generally felt by the leaders of the party that the record of the man and his remarkable personality could not fail to prove a strong addition to the strength of their ticket. Then followed a long period of quiet, careful work, of organ-

ization and of personal effort which lasted well through the summer. Wentworth gave up freely his accustomed summer rest at the seashore, and, with headquarters established in the tenement districts of the lower East Side, worked faithfully, painstakingly, unremittingly throughout the hot July and August days with his two great ambitions, which had now ceased to be problems, ever before him—the one, his political success; the other, his desire to make Isabel Maxwell his wife.

Some of his letters to her at this time gave evidence of the enthusiasm which he put into his work. Isabel had spent the winter in Rome, and, as the heat of the summer months rendered the Campagna unsafe, had escaped into Switzerland, where she had established herself for a time at Interlaken, preparatory to a late flight to London before her return to New York in the early fall. She loved the Alps, and seemed never to weary of their snowy beauty, much to Mrs. Chatterton's disgust, that lady infinitely preferring the delights of a London season. Isabel, however, wished to be alone with her thoughts, and was never tired of tramping over the mountain paths, a form of amusement of which Mrs. Chatterton, who was not yet sufficiently stout to appreciate the true joys of banting, had her own and not very complimentary opinion. In June she had written from Interlaken:

I cannot tell you how I love the Jungfrau; its ever-changing colors are glorious beyond anything in Switzerland. Especially do I love it when, in the evening, it changes from orange to rose and then to a wonderful cobalt purple that seems to hang between the dark hills on either side like a luminous, opalescent cloud. This morning we went up the Scheinige Platte by the funny little railway, and walked back over ever so long and steep a path, back and forth, like a zigzag down the mountainside—I should think about ten miles. On the way we stopped and had milk at a little house near one of the railway stations. Poor Mrs. Chatterton says she will never get her feet back to their accustomed position, after stepping downhill so much. I'm afraid she's going to be awfully stiff tomorrow. It was a fearful walk; I'm tired myself.

I'm so glad—more than I can tell you—

about your work. You know nothing could make any difference to me, ever, about you—for it is yourself that I love, and not the District Attorney-to-be nor the President nor the Czar of all the Russias, but how splendid, to achieve! I'm glad I'm not there. I fear I might hamper you, might in some way interfere with your career. I'll come back just in time to see you elected and offer you my best congratulations, if, indeed, such a great and distinguished personage will have time to see poor little me. I get the *Herald* every day, Paris edition, you know, and every time I find your name in it, which I do very, very often, indeed, I think of all the great things you are doing and of how proud I shall be when I come back, and you will take me to dinner, and everyone will say "There goes Wentworth, the new District Attorney, who smashed the trust company ring." Won't it be just wonderful! I can hardly wait to come. But it is better, dear, for I'm sure that now I would only be in your way, and people might talk. You see, you are an important personage now, and your comings and goings are not to be regarded lightly. Nothing destroys the hero worship of the crowd more quickly than to find that the man they have pedestaled is not a being of ice or iron, but a human soul, with human feelings like themselves. So for the present I will watch you, and love you, from afar. Good night. I send you a kiss by the courtesy of the moon, who looks down upon us both tonight.

Wentworth set great store by her letters, though he realized the wisdom which kept her from his side so long. They had not spoken of the matter while Isabel was in New York, but it was as fully understood between them as though they had discussed it in detail that during the coming winter they would be married, and he knew that with Isabel in New York he could not give to his campaign that almost fanatical enthusiasm with which he now threw himself into the fight. In August he wrote:

The heat here is almost unbearable, but to spend it among the people, the real people, teaches one what their needs and their sufferings are. We have been carrying on a campaign for cheaper ice—people like you and me could not ordinarily realize what a lump of ice as big as my two fists may mean to a sick child on one of these tropical nights. Sometimes I do not turn in until three or four in the morning—just when the milk wagons begin to rattle over from the ferries. There are so many speeches to be made, so many people to be visited, so much suffering to be relieved, reports to be read from our district and ward leaders, clubs to be planned,

local reform associations to be organized wherever possible, and then, when I get home, tired out, generally a long article to write for our papers—appeals to the corporations, the municipal authorities, the public generally. Sometimes I get into places I could not have believed existed—sweat shops and tenement houses where human beings swarm like flies, sleeping twenty or more in a room with but one window and that on a court, in an atmosphere thick with countless germs. We are fighting for better tenements, you know, and by securing evidence of positive violations of the building laws and bringing them forcibly to the attention of the upper West Side and the better classes generally, who seem unable to comprehend the existence of such conditions, we hope to win our fight.

Roger Wentworth was beginning at least to understand that the remedy for the slow poisoning disease of the social system was not the palliation of incidental and external symptoms, but the knife, thrust deep into the heart of the canker—that it might be cut out, to the last vestige.

Again later he wrote:

Last night we made a whirlwind trip through Harlem. We went in an automobile—Gary, Collins and myself. I made fourteen speeches, and am so hoarse I can scarcely speak. The people are beginning to understand. When I told them last night that it was useless to raid ten tipped-off pool rooms one week if an equal number were permitted to start up the next—that they must strike at the heart of the organization which permitted these things, they cheered until the hall fairly shook. I believe we are going to win.

It seemed natural to him to write these things to her, though he half suspected that her interest in them was more assumed than real. Of other things he wrote but little. This was his whole life. Except to tell her of his consuming love, there was little else for him to say. His energy had found expression in this championship of the cause of the people, and he poured into it all his great abilities. Beside it, all else seemed incidental—all else, that is, but Isabel.

At last word came that she was about to sail. Wentworth was feverishly excited for a week—a week which seemed interminable. She would arrive a fortnight before election—the crucial period of the campaign.

In anticipation of her coming he had his apartments in the Roxbury overhauled. He had spent but little time there of late, but now he relaxed somewhat his tireless efforts, in order to find time to give her own affairs some attention. Robert had written that he had finally brought the San Pedro affairs to a successful conclusion. He had, by Wentworth's advice, purchased the property of the adjoining owners, much to the chagrin of certain Mexican officials, who had regarded this particular piece of litigation as likely, properly fostered, to provide them with an adequate income for many years to come, and was about to start for New York. Wentworth would have greatly preferred to have Robert remain in Mexico until after the election, as he did not wish to be disturbed by extraneous matters until it was all over. But there was no help for it, so he went grimly through the week, until, early one Saturday morning, he found himself shivering on the dock, in a penetrating rain, with the *Lucania* a dull blur to the southeast, feeling her way cautiously up the channel to her pier.

VII

In their meeting, both felt a slight trace of disappointment, not in each other, but in the event itself. When an affair of so great importance has been a matter of anticipation for over a year, one comes to surround it with a thousand fancied details; it becomes glorified by the coloring of the imagination. Its actuality, in an atmosphere of porters, trunks and cabs, seems, somehow, to come as a shock, as though one had entered the gates of Paradise and found oneself on Fourteenth Street. Luckily, Mrs. Chatterton, suffering from an attack of neuralgia, decided to go to her hotel and see her doctor at once. For this they were glad. Mrs. Chatterton, educated in the school for scandal, had not been in the least taken into their confidence. She looked upon Wentworth as merely a politic attorney, solicitous as to the

welfare of a wealthy client. He took Isabel to the Gotham—she had determined not to open her house in the city for the present—and after leaving her maid to arrange the rooms, she and Wentworth breakfasted together.

During this meal they both felt strangely ill at ease, unexpectedly constrained, as though the reestablishment of their relations upon the old footing was a matter in which time would be obliged to play an important part. He suddenly found himself addressing her as Mrs. Maxwell; to her he had become Mr. Wentworth. The year of absence, of separation, had taken from them, apparently, all the little incidents of life upon which the daily intercourse of people depends. Deep in their hearts they knew that to fall into each other's arms would, through the heat of their love, melt away the walls of reserve which absence had built about their hearts, but in the deserted hotel breakfast room, at eleven in the morning, declarations of love seemed something curiously remote. After a time he fell to talking about his work, his career—it was a subject naturally uppermost in his thoughts, and served to fill the silences which both instinctively dreaded. Their only common ground of association lay over a year in the past, shrouded in the gloom of a tragedy to which each feared any reference, as certain to place even a greater restraint upon them than had the hiatus of the intervening fourteen months.

"Thank the Lord, it is almost over," he said, à propos of the campaign. For some reason, not at this time apparent to him, the bitter fight he was waging for political reform seemed less vitally important now that Isabel had appeared upon the scene.

"I'm glad," she replied, with more emphasis than he should have expected. "You hardly seem yourself; you are tired out. It must have been a terrible strain."

"It has been," he remarked, stirring his coffee absently—as his mind ran back over the crowded events of the past summer. Then his eyes flashed

and a wave of enthusiasm swept over him. "But it was worth it," he exclaimed vehemently, "for we are going to win."

"Yes, I'm sure of that." She looked at him with a new feeling of pride, perhaps somewhat mixed with apprehension. This political struggle seemed, somehow, to have come between her and the love she craved. "And then—"

"And then?" He looked at her closely. "And then," he repeated softly, "we shall be married, Isabel." It was the first time he had used her Christian name since they had met. She flushed confusedly. "Are you sure, Roger," she asked, "that you still wish it?"

He leaned toward her. "I do wish it more than anything in the world—more than anything I could possibly desire." His voice, trembling with emotion, thrilled her. Womanlike, she asked: "More than you wish to be District Attorney?"

The love in his face flickered out and was replaced by the stern lines with which the work of the past summer had marked it. "Yes," he replied, troubled, "even more than that; yet, for the sake of those for whom my work has been done, I should not wish to be obliged to make the choice. There is room for both in my life, I think."

To her, loving as she did, there was room for nothing in her life but Roger Wentworth. "'Tis woman's whole existence," she found herself repeating, but she smiled at him happily. Suddenly a thought of the past came to her. "Have you heard from Robert?" she inquired.

"Robert!" He had forgotten him. Something indefinable, intangible, some strange telepathic instinct, told him that in that name lay trouble for them both. "Robert," he repeated. "Yes—he will be here any day now."

"Here?" Isabel's face, her voice, showed a note of alarm which set his nerves jangling.

"Yes; why not? He has finished his work at the mines. Your property has doubled in value as a result of it. He has done well."

The expression of anxiety in her face deepened. "I'm sorry, sorry," she said. "I wish he could have remained away until—until"—she hesitated—"until everything was over."

"Why?" he asked suddenly. "Why?"

"I do not know. I am not sure, Roger. I do not want to speak of—that terrible night, but—but—" She could hardly continue; her face was almost gray in the morning light.

"Go on," he said gravely. "I must know."

"But I do not know, myself. I am not sure, but—but—that night, after you had gone—I thought that—that Robert—knew." With a nervous gesture she pressed her hand to her breast, breathing heavily.

"Why do you think that? What reason have you?" he inquired almost roughly.

"He—he said some things—there was the pistol—he picked it up—he came in so suddenly after you—after you had gone. If he had been in the hall—if he had—" Her voice trailed off into silence.

"But he said nothing—afterwards and for all these months. If he had known, he would have said something before now. He could have no motive—no possible motive." Suddenly an idea came to him. "Did he know of your return?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied. "He wrote to me occasionally, and has known for weeks that I intended to return by the *Lucania*. My passage was engaged over two months ago, you know."

"But still I can see no motive." Wentworth's glance concentrated itself upon her. "Can you?" he inquired pointedly.

For a short time she was silent, then, very quietly reaching across the table, she placed her hand upon his. "Yes, Roger, I can. Robert believes that he loves me."

"Has he told you so?" inquired Wentworth anxiously.

"Of course," she laughed. "Otherwise I should not have known. He told me so that night, before you came. I ordered him from the room."

"The cur!" began Wentworth suddenly; then, realizing his own position, he flushed and became silent.

"And he has written me the same thing since I have been away. I am positive that I shall have to refuse him again."

"And then—what will he do?"

"What can he do?" she laughed. "Poor boy, he does not understand what it really means to care as—as we do," she concluded shyly. "He will forget all about it, of course."

To Wentworth, with a mind centered upon his political work, there seemed no finality whatever in this "of course." He knew that Robert Maxwell, if he had been an eye witness of the gruesome tragedy of that June night over a year ago, held him and his political success in the hollow of his hand—that the story, given to the opposition papers a week before the election, would kill him beyond all redemption. He knew how the thing could be made to read, in the hands of the vitriolic editor of the *Star* or the *News*, and he realized fully that if that story in all its ugliness, told by the nephew of the dead man, were to be spread before the vultures of the opposition party, they would rend and tear him until nothing was left but the bones of a family skeleton, nothing of his reputation, and—God pity her—nothing of hers.

But of these things he said nothing to Isabel. The foundations of his life seemed slipping away from beneath him, but he determined to meet the issue alone, and beneath all there was a belief that no Supreme Power would allow the work for the cause of humanity which he had undertaken to be overthrown in such a way. He clung to that curious belief in personal intervention upon the part of Providence which makes the most skeptical of us thank God that our particular affairs have gone well, that our particular lives have been saved—a belief based upon an egotism so sublime that it almost reaches the heights of divinity itself. "It falleth alike upon the just and the unjust" flashed suddenly into his mind, but he put it aside. The

calamity which suggested itself was too terrible to be thought of; therefore it could not be.

They concluded their meal in silence. Wentworth, long overdue at his headquarters, was obliged to leave her. Other friends were coming; she was to dine with the Tracys; she would be fully occupied for the day and evening. He, with a long day and night ahead of him, left her, agreeing to come in for tea at five the following day, which was Sunday, and went back to his work.

Meanwhile, the cause of their anxieties, Robert Maxwell, having handled the affairs of the San Pedro mines in such a way that not only had their value been greatly increased, but also that the subsequent management of these properties would almost inevitably have to be left to him, to insure the continuance of the arrangements which he had made, was breakfasting at a hotel in Cincinnati, where he had that morning arrived from New Orleans, preparatory to taking the early afternoon limited to New York. He was coming to New York for one purpose, and one alone: to ask Isabel Maxwell to be his wife.

He had no plans whatever regarding any move against Wentworth, thinking, quite erroneously, that the latter, engrossed in his political campaign, had long ago forgotten all about Isabel, as he believed she had forgotten about him. He felt that he had a clear field, and, being one of those men who accept the proverbial advice, to "try, try again," without sufficient discernment to realize that trying in certain instances is about as effectual as attempting to move Gibraltar with a toothpick, he felt certain that, after his able management of Isabel's property, he could in a reasonable time convince her that his love and care were all that she needed to make her life entirely happy.

He had increased confidence in his powers with the opposite sex, his egotism in this respect having been considerably enlarged by several *affaires du cœur* with complacent señoritas, who

found this rugged *Americano* blessed relief from incessant chocolate, cigarettes and afternoon siestas. But, to his credit be it said, he did not intend to blackmail Isabel or Wentworth by means of the story of the tragedy at Shadow Lawn that fatal night, though he had witnessed it in detail and had stored it away in one of the corners of his devious brain, ready for use in case of necessity. He had no plan for using it, merely because he saw no necessity for doing so—like a man with a loaded revolver, who does not forget that he carries it.

As a matter of fact, Robert, after his dismissal by Isabel that night, had lighted a cigarette and decided to take a stroll along the beach, ending up with a drink or two at one of the hotels, where he knew it could be obtained even at that late hour. He left the house by a rear entrance through the conservatory, and as he turned toward the road he saw Roger Wentworth standing on the veranda, glancing in at the open library window. Instantly alert, he crept through the shrubbery, gained the veranda from the rear end by climbing noiselessly over the railing, and, standing close by the open window, had seen and heard all that occurred in the library that night. As Wentworth was about to depart, he hurriedly left the window, and, stepping around the corner of the house, entered the front door with his latch key. He therefore appeared before Isabel almost as soon as she had called for help, and observing her later tear up her letter to Wentworth, he had taken the precaution to search the waste basket into which she had thrown the fragments, and by piecing them together was able to add this piece of evidence, which Isabel had perhaps unconsciously and through mere force of habit dated, to that which he had stored in his brain. Thus it will be seen that Robert Wentworth came to New York to some extent the master of the situation.

There was perhaps one other element which entered into Robert Maxwell's calculations, which serves to ex-

plain to a large extent his subsequent actions. He wanted money, wanted it badly for what it would bring him. His uncle had left him a legacy of but twenty thousand dollars—the most exasperating sum of which a man of his inclination could possibly be possessed. Too little to provide an income of any size, it was valuable to him only as so much spending money, and he had treated it accordingly. His experiences and his expenses in Mexico had been large and varied. Mrs. Maxwell's estate of not less than twenty millions appealed to him strongly, and he had no compunction whatever about acquiring an interest in it through the comparatively simple operation of marriage.

He arrived in the morning, went to the Manhattan, called up Isabel, and, finding that she had various prior engagements for the day, was at last obliged to content himself with an appointment to call at four o'clock. Isabel set this time advisedly, thinking it not unlikely that Roger's appearance at five might prove opportune, in case matters developed unpleasantly.

VIII

PROMPTLY at four o'clock Robert Maxwell was ushered into the drawing-room of Mrs. Maxwell's private suite at the Gotham, and found her awaiting him, looking more lovely than he had ever seen her, in a tea gown which, even at Paquin's, had been regarded as a creation of more than usual happiness. Bronzed as he was, with an air of the larger spaces about him, Isabel could not but feel that this year of work had made him less of a boy than heretofore—yet perhaps on that account the more to be feared.

"It seems so good to see you again after so long," he cried with unassumed pleasure, as he clasped her extended hand in both of his, then kissed it.

"And you, too, Robert," she rejoined, motioning him to a seat. "We have both been wanderers. It seems good

to be home again, doesn't it? You look so well—better than I have ever seen you."

"By George, Isabel, you are simply stunning! You look about eighteen."

"You silly boy!" she laughed. "I'm quite well again, that's all. And I see that Mexico has agreed with you. When did you arrive?"

"Ten o'clock this morning. I wanted to come to you before, but you wouldn't let me. I suppose you are loaded down with engagements—lunching, you said, today, and driving—"

"Yes, with Mrs. Gary, and the Richmonds—you know them, don't you?"

"I used to. I'm a stranger in New York now. How about dinner?"

"I'm afraid I can't go with you today. Tomorrow, perhaps—I'm not sure yet."

He looked at her suspiciously. "Any one in particular?" he inquired.

She bit her lip with nervousness. "Oh, no—no one in particular. There are so many friends, you know, in town now. Everybody's coming back; and I've been away so long—as long as you have. I did not suppose you would be obliged to spend a whole year in Mexico."

"I had to; your interests required it, Isabel."

"Yes—your letters have told me. I don't know how I am ever going to thank you for all that you have done."

"I didn't tell you all in my letters—the best news. The English syndicate has offered ten millions for the property as it stands. I have carried all the negotiations through personally. I hardly know whether to advise you to accept it or not—the property is worth much more than ten millions."

"Ten millions!" she repeated. "Isn't it wonderful even to think of such a lot of money! How beautifully you have managed!"

"If you refuse, and want to operate it yourself, you can do even better. Of course, there would have to be a company, and a man who understands things to manage it. I've got the whole thing mapped out."

"You must talk it over with Mr. Wentworth, Robert. You know, he has all my matters in charge. I am afraid I haven't much head for such things, myself."

"Mr. Wentworth!" exclaimed Robert irritably.

"Why, yes; you know him—he's my lawyer—for the estate. You must have been in communication with him while you have been away—"

"Oh, yes, of course—Wentworth—"

Mrs. Maxwell rose. "We must tell him all about it. He will be so glad, and his judgment is so good. Suppose I telephone for him now?" She walked to a desk in one corner of the room and took up the telephone. She had some vague idea that she might reach Wentworth and hurry his appearance, now that the conversation seemed safely diverted into business channels.

"Won't some other time do?" he asked with a scowl. "I can see him at his office."

"But he'll be so glad to know," she persisted, her hand about the 'phone. "I don't know what I should do without you, Robert, and Roger—" She hesitated. The slip was most unfortunate.

"Roger?" he asked ominously.

"Why, yes—Mr. Wentworth, you know. He has been so kind. I can never thank him, and you know how busy he is now. This is the last week of the campaign; next Tuesday, a week from tomorrow, everything will be decided. It would kill him not to win."

"Then, if he is so busy, Isabel, let the matter of the property wait. There's no hurry; it can wait just as well until after the election. Possibly by that time the Britishers may offer an extra million."

"Very well." She replaced the telephone upon the desk. "I thought you would be glad to see him."

"I'll see him, all right—downtown. It isn't necessary for him to be hovering about here."

"Don't say such unworthy things, Robert. He's one of the executors of the estate; it is necessary for me to see him frequently."

Robert rose and approached her. "Isabel, I've been away a long time," he began, extending his hand. She took it mechanically, a great fear in her heart.

"Yes, Robert, it has been a long time," she answered quietly.

"And I've worked and worked for you every day. And every day during all those weary months"—Robert forgot for the moment about the señoritas—"I've thought of you and of what I could do for you."

"It has been very good of you, Robert, very. I wish I could tell you how I appreciate it, how grateful—" She quietly withdrew her hand, and nervously caught back and arranged a straggling lock of hair.

"It is not gratitude I want, Isabel. You know—you've always known—that I love you. I've always loved you; I always shall." He took her hand again, as though to draw her to him. "You need me, Isabel, to care for you, to protect you—"

She drew back suddenly and gently released her hand. "Don't, Robert," she cried softly; "don't spoil it all that way. You know that can never—never be."

"But why," he asked intensely, "why? I love you. Why do you always drive me away? I would do anything—"

"It isn't that, Robert. I like to believe that you would, like to think of you as a dear friend; but I can never care for you in any other way—never."

He looked at her exquisite face, her alluring figure, and his face grew pale with anger.

"You love someone else?" he demanded harshly.

The red glow which flamed in her cheeks told him the truth; she did not attempt to deny it. "That is my affair," she answered coldly.

"Who is it? Tell me!" He grasped her arm angrily.

"Robert, don't—you hurt me. You have no right to speak to me in that way."

"Who is it? You must tell me—I demand it!" he almost shouted.

"By what right—" she asked in anger.

"It's that cur, Wentworth," he shouted in a rage. "You can't deny it—though, God knows, you ought to be ashamed not to."

Isabel, her face drawn with anger, blazed with the fiery courage of her Southern ancestors. "Why should I deny it?" she cried. "I am not ashamed of it. I am going to marry Mr. Wentworth." She faced him with burning cheeks.

Robert, his suspicions confirmed, was almost beside himself with fury.

"Never!" he shouted. "Never!"

"Why not," she asked hotly, "if he wishes it and I do, too?"

"Because he was my uncle's murderer," he said.

She shrank back—the blow had come. "What do you mean?" she asked pitifully. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," he said, and his voice seemed like a whip, "that on that night when he crept into my uncle's house in the dark, and you received him in your arms, and your husband found you together, the shock that killed him was Wentworth—Wentworth; and you know it."

In the vague distances of space that reeled before her, she saw Fate, with sneering lips, scourging her on with the bitter lash of scorpions, to God knows what catastrophe.

"Don't—don't!" she cried in an agony of suffering. "It was his heart—"

"Yes, his heart, that you between you broke. I saw it all from the veranda—I'd gone outside to smoke; and, by all the laws of God and man, you shall never marry him while I live!"

Isabel, reeling, supported herself against the desk. She forced herself to be calm. "You forget yourself," she said. "I am not obliged to account to you for my actions. I have loved Roger Wentworth ever since I first knew him. You know that my mother forced me into a loveless marriage with your uncle, and you also know that I respected and honored him always, and was a true wife to him.

That very night I had written to Mr. Wentworth, sending him away forever. Your uncle's return was a cruel, horrible accident. Roger Wentworth is no more guilty of his death than you are, and I love him and shall marry him in spite of anything you can say or do."

"You would not dare!" began Robert in a furious voice.

"I will," she answered, all her determination concentrated in the words.

"You are determined?" he asked ominously.

"Absolutely," she replied.

Robert grasped his hat and stick. "Then, by God, I'll have the story in every newspaper in the city by morning. I'll denounce him to the world for what he is, and I'll ruin him, and you, utterly. Then we will see if you dare!"

"Robert, Robert!" she gasped. "You wouldn't!"

Robert started for the door. "Then promise me upon your honor to give him up absolutely forever, and marry me." He paused at the threshold.

"I can't—I can't," she cried. She did not realize for a moment the effect that this thing would have upon Wentworth's career, knowing only that if his love were equal to hers, no social ostracism could prove more than a passing shadow upon their mutual happiness.

"Then take the consequences," he exclaimed furiously as he left the room.

A momentary glimpse of the horror of the thing came to her inward vision.

"Robert—Robert!" she called after him, rushing to the door, but he had already turned the corner of the hall, and by the time she reached the elevator he was out of sight, having evidently caught a passing car.

She groped her way back to her rooms through a mist of tears and sat, a picture of woe, in bitter silence, awaiting Wentworth's arrival. "No sooner do I come into this man's life than I ruin it," she thought. "Why did I not have the courage to give him up?"

IX

THE minutes dragged by on wings of stone. She tore her fingers to the quick in her nervousness. Even now, Robert, closeted with some reporter or newspaper editor, might be speaking the words which would cast them out from New York like the veriest criminals. At length, ten minutes late but glad it was no worse, Wentworth came. Between the time of his announcement from below and his appearance in the drawing-room she had opportunity to rush into her boudoir and efface some of the traces of her recent tumultuous interview. She received him calmly, almost happily. She felt that she was about to put his love to the greatest test that could be applied to a man's devotion to a woman. If he stood it, nothing mattered.

"You look tired," she said, as he came in. "Won't you sit down?"

"No, not yet," he laughed. "Remember, Isabel, I have not welcomed you back yet." He grasped her hands, and, with all the love and yearning of those many months, took her into his arms and kissed her over and over until she was obliged to escape from him through sheer lack of breath.

"It seems so wonderful—to be here with you," he said, as he led her to a divan; "so immeasurably more wonderful even than I had pictured it." He kissed her again. "My love," he breathed, "nothing matters except you—nothing at all."

She raised herself and looked at him steadily. "Do you mean that?" she asked with a level glance.

"Why, of course I do. Isabel, what do you mean—what has happened?" For the first time he scrutinized her closely and observed her agitation. "What is wrong, dear? Tell me." He took her hand and stroked it gently.

"I have ruined you," she said quietly.

"Why, Isabel," he said, laughing nervously, "what do you mean?"

"I have ruined you," she repeated without emotion. "Robert has been here; he knows all."

"All?" he asked uneasily. "All?"

"Yes, all. He asked me to marry him. I refused. He divined that I intended to marry you. He wanted me to promise upon my honor to give you up."

"And you refused, of course. You refused, my darling?" he asked eagerly, fatuously.

"I refused," she continued calmly. "Then he said he would give the story to the newspapers and ruin you."

"My God!" He sprang to his feet and began pacing up and down, his face drawn with a thousand lines. "Where is he? I must find him!"

"I do not know; he said he was going to the newspapers at once."

Wentworth staggered to the door, clutching at his throat convulsively. His emotion almost strangled him. "The election!" he gasped. "I am lost!"

For the first time the full force and horror of the situation came to her. She rose with an agonized cry. "Oh! I didn't realize what it meant to you! I should have consented. What have I done, Roger—what have I done? How can you ever forgive me?"

With his life's ambition fading before him like a shattered dream, Roger Wentworth's love, greater even than that great ambition, asserted itself. "My poor little girl!" he cried, taking her in his arms. "It was hard—harder for you than for me. Forgive me—"

"But you can still do something! There is time—there must be time! You must find him—"

"But where—where?" He gazed at her helplessly.

"Go to his hotel—his clubs—to the newspapers—"

"I don't know his hotel. I could not go to the papers—it would only make it worse."

"Go—go" she cried; "try every hotel in town—there are not many at which he would stop. Go quickly! Promise him anything—anything—to save yourself."

"And you?" he asked. "Do you not realize what this story, as he will tell it, must mean to you?"

"I care nothing about that—nothing. It is of you I am thinking—you alone. Go quickly, and may God be with you!" She held open the door.

"I will find him," he said, and staggered out.

Robert Maxwell, on leaving the Hotel Gotham that afternoon, had returned to the Manhattan, given up his room and departed with his belongings to the studio of a friend on Sixty-seventh Street, who, having gone abroad for the winter, had placed it and all its many privileges at his disposal. Consequently, when Wentworth, after trying successively the St. Regis, the Astor and the Knickerbocker, had arrived at the Manhattan, he could learn nothing, except that Mr. Maxwell had gone, leaving no address. He continued his weary round until he had tried every hotel of prominence south of Fifty-ninth Street, and then, worn out and utterly broken down by the events of the afternoon, returned to the Gotham to report to Isabel the results of his unsuccessful search. She met him at the door, having meanwhile changed her tea gown for a plain traveling dress of black.

"Did you find him?" she asked eagerly as he came in. Even the fear that Wentworth had succeeded in his search, a fear growing out of the apprehension that such success might result in some promise on Wentworth's part excluding her from his life, did not prevent her from hoping with all the intensity of her woman's love that he might be freed from this impending catastrophe; but even as she spoke she realized that his search had been futile.

He threw himself wearily into a chair. Robert had been at the Manhattan, he explained, but had gone—no one knew where.

"I have ruined your life, and I can do nothing," she cried, and sinking her head upon her arms she sobbed bitterly.

Roger rose and went to her. "Isabel, my precious girl," he said, putting his arm about her trembling shoulders, "never mind; we have each other—we must face it together."

"You must try—try— It may not

be too late. I cannot bring this thing upon you. You must go to the newspapers—”

“That would be worse than useless,” he replied gently, “even if he should say nothing. They are only waiting for a chance to get up some story about me—some scandal that they can use to snatch victory from what they know just now to be certain defeat. They will stop at nothing. He will be welcomed with open arms; his story will be spread across their front pages in type that can be read across the street.”

Already in imagination he could see the yellow sheets with their red-and-black scareheads—“Wentworth a Murderer,” with perhaps a saving “said to be” in minute type. “Death of Metal King Explained at Last”—“The Guilty Wife and Lover Escape”—“Tragedy Witnessed by Colonel Maxwell’s Nephew.”

“Murderer”—“Murderer”—“Murderer”—would the voters of New York place such a man in the District Attorney’s office to make justice a mockery? Never again could he hold up his head in New York. No possible explanation could make the story less damning—the circumstances were too strong. And Isabel—not a woman of her acquaintance today but would scorn to notice her by tomorrow. She would be pilloried as a scarlet woman—a woman found out; and many in the highest places, with less cause for their own immorality than the poorest East Side drab, would draw their skirts aside and sneer at this woman, whose truth and honor had never wavered but for that one fatal moment—a moment for which he felt God Himself had long ago forgiven her freely and utterly.

“If you could only find him,” she sobbed, “I would do anything—anything! I would infinitely rather marry him than bring this terrible thing upon you.”

“Marry him!” cried Wentworth savagely, his primal instincts roused. “Marry that cad—you must be mad”—he left her and strode restlessly up and down the room—“mad, even to

think of such a thing—that blackguard!” He came up to her again and turned her tearful face toward him. “Don’t you love me as much as you did?” he demanded.

“Roger—how can you say that to me now? Don’t you see that it is because of love for you that I would make even that sacrifice to save you?”

He saw that in her eyes which reassured him. “Oh, my dear, my dear!” he cried. “I know you love me. What shall I do?”

She looked dimly at him through her tears and tried to laugh a little. “It is your career—your life’s work that I am thinking of; it has meant so much to you.”

“What difference can all that make? What difference can anything make now? All the things in my life are as nothing compared to you and your love. We’ll face this thing together.” He extended his arms, and she crept into them, crying softly, yet with a great joy in her heart. He had stood the test. He loved her above all else—that was enough; she had no more to ask of life.

After a time she began to think—to realize what the coming day would bring to them both. The world, after all, seemed so large, so beautiful, and this cruel city, with its petty meanesses, such a small part of it. “Roger,” she whispered to him, “take me away.”

“Away?” he asked, not understanding. “Where?”

“Anywhere—I don’t care—anywhere away from this terrible city. Let them fight it out among themselves here. If these people want to be governed by a set of thieves, let them—they have the power to prevent it whenever they please. You have done your best; let us go away together somewhere—to Italy—to Egypt—to Mexico—”

“What!” he cried. “And leave my fight unfinished! How can I?”

“What more can you do now? After the papers come out tomorrow you could not go on. Your opponents will put their hired thugs in every crowd

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and jeer you from the platform. You will only hurt your cause by staying. Let us go—now—tonight—will you, dear?" She put her arms softly about his neck, and pleaded with her eyes, her lips, her clinging form.

"I cannot, Isabel—it would appear so cowardly—"

"What do you care—for others? You know that your conscience is clear. Write a letter to your people—to your papers; tell them the truth—make no excuses—and say that for the good of the party you have gone away, leaving the decision to them."

"It will mean defeat—to go," he groaned.

"It will mean more than defeat to stay," she cried. "It will mean the sacrifice of your self-respect to engage in any contest with those people. Hold yourself aloof. Let the voters decide; and if they defeat you, as they probably will, I shall not care—for I have you, and I know you, my dearest dear, and nothing else matters. Let us go tonight!"

He left her and walked to the other side of the room, looking moodily out of the window. There was the great city, a thousand—a million—winking jewel lights in the gathering darkness. Far below he could hear the rumble of the carriages and the deep-throated warning of the motor cars on the Avenue. It had meant so much to him, and yet—to go about under the lash of scorn, to meet the down-turned thumb at every point—God, that would indeed be the bitterness of defeat! He thought of a verse he had read—somewhere. The title, he dimly remembered, "The Loser Wins":

The loser wins; the down-turned thumb
The world forever shows;
Yet he who, smiling, breaks the sword
A greater victory knows.
The fight is cruel, bitter, long;
Yelp, curs, and take your toll!
The loser wins, who keeps through all
An undefiled soul.

He repeated it softly to himself—the loser wins—let these curs yelp and snarl—he would have his heart's desire. He turned to Isabel, who stood watching him anxiously, and held out

his arms. "We will go," he said, and the joy in her face repaid him a thousandfold. "We will go to Mexico. When can you be ready to start?"

"I am ready now," she replied.

"There is a train for Cincinnati and the West at ten-thirty," he said. "I remember that. I have frequently taken it." He looked at his watch. "I will come for you at ten; it is after seven now."

"Here?" she asked.

"Yes."

"I think I had better come to you," she said quietly. "It will be wiser—there are so many people about here—you are well known. You are still at the Roxbury?"

"Yes; you know the number—"

"Forty-eight, isn't it? I will come before ten. Good-bye, dear."

He kissed her ardently, his brain on fire. "I shall be ready," he said, and left her.

X

UPON Wentworth's departure, Isabel gave a few hurried directions to her maid concerning her luggage and ordered some dinner sent up from the café. She felt no desire to eat, but realized its necessity. She had hardly finished when Mrs. Chatterton was announced. For a moment she contemplated sending word that she was not in, but, on second thought, decided to let her come up. It would be better to see her, she thought, chatterbox though she was; she could at least say good-bye—though Mrs. Chatterton would not know it until afterwards. She rearranged her hair hastily before the mirror.

Mrs. Chatterton, somewhat stouter than the year before, came in, puffing, and looking sharply about her. "Isabel, you've been crying," she announced by way of greeting.

"Why, what makes you think so?" Mrs. Maxwell examined her eyes carefully in the glass.

"A little powder, dear, is all they need. You can't deceive me. People can't hide their troubles from me; it

must be because I'm so sympathetic." She sat down heavily. "I know more about the troubles of my friends than they do themselves. It's wonderful what a sympathetic nature will do."

Isabel laughed. "Oh, come, Sallie," she said, "don't worry about my troubles. I know you really do not think I have any."

"Oh, my dear, everyone has, but they are generally too timid to speak of them. I never allow them to be that way with me. I know my Christian duty, and I do it. Comfort the suffering—that's my motto. Now, out with it—what's the matter?"

"Nothing, I assure you, nothing at all."

Mrs. Chatterton looked her over with a grim smile. "Isabel," she said, "your eyes are red. You've been crying. Mr. Wentworth dashes out of the hotel like mad; he's your lawyer. What could be more clear? Trouble, of course. Anyone with half an eye can see that. Now, what kind of trouble? That's the question. Lawyer only—money trouble; lawyer and tears—that means trouble of the heart. Am I not right, my dear? If you were not a widow, I should strongly suspect that you were planning to get a divorce."

Mrs. Maxwell went over and sat beside Mrs. Chatterton upon the divan. She had taken a sudden resolve, and, with her usual directness of action, proceeded at once to put it into execution. "Sallie," she said earnestly, "you've known me a long time."

"Ever since you were a child, and I've spanked you, too—you often deserved it." As she spoke, Mrs. Chatterton took one of her friend's small white hands and pressed it softly. "Do you deserve it now, dear?"

"You know, then," continued Isabel seriously, "that I am a good woman; indeed, that goes without saying, I think, but in thought as well—isn't that true?"

"Too good, my dear, always. Too unselfish and thoughtful of others."

"Then, if you should hear bad things about me, you wouldn't believe them."

Mrs. Chatterton pricked up her ears;

the expression of her face was as that of the hound upon the scent. "Certainly not, my dear," she replied. "What are they?"

"I'm going to elope."

Mrs. Chatterton turned to Isabel with a look of grieved disappointment. "Why, that isn't bad," she said. "That's only silly."

"Oh, that isn't all—not nearly all. The man that I love—"

"There, I knew you were in trouble."

"That isn't the trouble."

"Isn't the man all right? Don't tell me he has a wife already!"

"Certainly not."

"Oh, it's all right, then; only, why deprive your friends of the usual chance to gloat?"

Isabel, rising from her seat, began to walk restlessly about. "You must be serious, Sallie," she said. "The matter is no laughing one, I assure you."

"Evidently not, Isabel. Forgive me. And if I can help you in any way, you have only to let me know."

"I know it, Sallie—that is why I am telling you. I want you to talk, do you understand, to talk—"

"My friends all say I do too much of that now," laughed Mrs. Chatterton. "They seem to regard it as a specialty of mine."

"Then talk for me. You will know all about it tomorrow—the papers will be full of it; you had much better hear it from me. Listen! Tomorrow they will say that the man I have run away with was my husband's murderer."

Mrs. Chatterton, dropping all her bantering manner, rose from the divan with a look of dismay upon her usually placid countenance. "Good heavens, Isabel!" she stammered. "What do you mean? Are you losing your mind?"

"Wait—wait until I have finished." Isabel waved her back with an eager gesture. "That night—that awful night, when Ashby died—"

"Of heart failure," interjected Mrs. Chatterton.

"Of heart failure, yes; but you did not know that when my husband re-

turned that night, after missing his train, he found me with—with another man."

"Who?"

"That I shall not tell you; tomorrow you will know."

"But what of it?"

"My husband died of heart failure from the shock. God, how can I ever forget it?" She dashed the tears from her eyes, then went on. "And yet we were innocent—absolutely innocent. He had come to say good-bye. I should probably never have seen him again. We have kept that secret, he and I, all these months."

Mrs. Chatterton came up to her and put her hand on her shoulder. "I don't see what difference it makes, my dear. Why don't you continue to keep it? I shall certainly never speak of it."

"But you must, you must! We were seen by a third person—a man who pretends to love me. When he learned that I would not marry him, that I loved this other man, he swore to tell the whole wretched story—to give it to the yellow newspapers—to ruin us absolutely, unless I consented to give this man up."

"And did you?"

"I offered to—I tried to. I told him I would marry this—this cur, rather than bring such ruin upon him. But the man who loves me wouldn't consent. He refused to take his safety at such a price. Think of it—he loves me enough for that—so much that he will give up his life, his career, his friends—everything—for me! Isn't it wonderful! Isn't it magnificent! And I love him for it—you can never know how much I love him. And now—go and talk—talk—tell everyone—blazon it from the housetops! Say that it is true, as I have told you, and that we are going away together; that the world may say or think or do what it likes. I hate them! I defy them! I am the happiest woman in the world, for I love him—I love him—I love him—" Exhausted she sank upon the couch and, burying her head in the pillows, sobbed convulsively.

Mrs. Chatterton, stunned by this outburst, and too much taken aback for a moment to do more than gaze at Isabel in amazement, presently sat down beside her and put her arm about her shoulders. "Isabel, my dear," she whispered, "wouldn't it be—braver to stay and face it?"

"No—no, you don't understand. This man's position is such that the papers will distort and magnify and lie about this terrible thing until neither he nor I can show our faces among decent people again. You do not understand—you cannot! It is braver to go—to leave these wolves to gloat over their lies, and forget it all among the trees and the hills under God's clean sky. We know we are innocent—why should we wear our souls out in useless attempts to convince a lot of people about whom we care nothing? You will tell my friends, Sallie—they will understand, as you do; what difference does it make about the rest?"

Mrs. Chatterton, realizing the futility of further argument, rose and extended her hand. "You are going tonight?" she asked.

"Tonight," said Isabel.

"Then, good-bye, my dear, and God bless you! I must go now. I am looking for Mrs. Varnum—she's stopping here. Good-bye—my dear." She kissed Isabel with tears in her eyes.

"Do you know," she said, "that for the very first time in my life I don't feel like talking at all. Perhaps something may happen—one never can tell. Somehow, I feel as though it were all a horrid dream." She plodded out, calling her good-byes as she slowly made her way to the elevator.

XI

WENTWORTH left the Gotham in a maze of conflicting emotions, and, hailing a taxicab, ordered the driver to take him to the ferry. Here he secured the tickets and Pullman accommodations, after which he drove rapidly to his hotel. It was nearly eight o'clock when

he arrived there, and he remembered that he had had nothing to eat. Dismissing the cab, he went into the café, and ordered a milk punch and a sandwich, which he swallowed with feverish haste. Accustomed to his quick and somewhat erratic meals, made necessary by the exigencies of his political work, the waiters, who all knew him and swore by him, looked on in respectful admiration at this great man, devouring his simple meal, to gain thereby a little more time for his campaign. One of them, a veteran of the place, who had waited on Wentworth for years, bent over as he brought him his check and whispered respectfully: "You are going to win, sir; it's a sure thing."

Wentworth turned and regarded him blankly. "Yes—yes, I am," he stammered as he rose; then to himself—the words kept ringing in his ears—"the loser wins"—"the loser wins"—"the loser wins—" The loser, yes, but the loser of what? Clearly, the verses meant the loser of any fight, to win which would cost one his self-respect—a fight which were better lost, if thereby one could keep one's soul clean, one's self-esteem intact. Was he doing this? Would not his going away with Isabel be tantamount in the eyes of the world to a confession of guilt? These doubts assailed him as he ascended in the elevator and entered his apartment.

The place was dark and silent. Suddenly he remembered that, it being Sunday evening, his man was out, and would be away until the next morning. So much the better, he thought, as he snapped on the electric light and threw his coat and hat upon a chair. He turned and gazed about the place regretfully. It was his library, his workshop. His favorite books lined the walls. On the cases were all the little things he prized—things he had collected abroad—curios, pictures, ivories. On his desk stood a picture of his mother.

The thought of the disgrace to come to her almost unmanned him. She had been so eager from the first to learn of the success of his work, and he had

written her every Sunday night, week after week, no matter how other matters pressed, telling her of the progress he was making. What, he wondered, could he write her now? On the desk he found a memorandum of two telephone calls, brought up from the office. They were from headquarters, apprising him of the absolute necessity of his appearance late that night at an important conference. For the early part of the evening he had made no engagements, anticipating dining with Isabel.

He went into his dressing room, and presently returned with a large travelling bag. "This will have to do for the present," he muttered; "the rest they can send on later." He opened the bag and placed it upon a chair, and put into it the picture of his mother. Then, thinking that the glass might be broken, he removed the picture from its silver frame and placed it carefully in his wallet. Then he began to take package after package of papers from his desk, until it seemed that the top of it, large as a table, would hold no more. He looked at this great mass of correspondence, canceled cheques, important documents of every sort, and began feebly to sort them over with the intention of destroying most and taking the really important ones with him. In a few moments he saw the hopelessness of the task; to read and assort that accumulated mass of material would be the work of weeks. Impatiently thrusting the mass of papers aside, he drew from one of the drawers Isabel's letters—he had kept them all, carefully preserved in a small rosewood box. These he placed, box and all, in the satchel, then began to fill it with a few necessary articles of clothing. It was a large English kit bag, almost a steamer trunk in size, but he soon found its capacity limited for a man who proposed making an indefinite stay. Suddenly it came to him that this was to be his wedding trip—he had planned that Isabel and himself should be married in Cincinnati—this hateful expedition into the unknown, this abandonment of all his

cherished plans. Instinctively he felt, in spite of his great love for Isabel, what a man's work, his plans, his ambitions meant to him. Many a man in the past, he knew, had thrown them all aside for love of a woman; yet how many had found happiness in doing so?

A vision of long, beautiful nights under the Mexican moon came to him, nights made glorious by Isabel's presence; yet he knew that these would inevitably be followed by days of chafing at inaction, days when he would feel the call of the world, the call to work, to which he, a strong man, with a strong man's hopes and ambitions, would surely respond when the joys of a *dolce far niente* existence had begun to pall. In an outburst of helpless rage he swept aside the mass of documents upon the table, scattering them partly upon the floor, pushed the telephone instrument and writing materials to one corner of the desk and flung the half-packed case upon it. He was busily engaged in adding to its contents, when the telephone bell rang sharply. He took the instrument up and listened for a moment. "Send him up," he cried eagerly, as he replaced the telephone upon the desk, and hastily removing the traveling case, threw it into a corner. Gathering up the scattered papers, he thrust them into the open drawers, restoring the room to a semblance of order, then, taking a revolver from where it lay upon a nearby bookcase, he stepped to the door and arranged the catch so that it could be opened from without. Then he stood in the middle of the room and waited, his face set in anxious lines.

"Come in," he cried as the doorbell rang. The door opened, and Robert Maxwell entered the room.

It would be difficult to say by just what mental processes Robert Maxwell reached his determination to call upon Wentworth. Had he been really in love with Isabel, it is doubtful whether, with his revengeful nature, he would have done so. After reaching the studio and finding it excessively lonely, he decided, with the zest of one long absent from New York, to plunge once

more into the life he knew and loved so well. He took a cab to the *Café Martin* and ate in solitary silence, envious of the prosperous looking men about him, with their beautiful and overdressed women. The price of his caviare, green turtle soup, duck and *Chateau Mouton Rothschild* reminded him that this life took a long purse—something which he at the moment did not possess. He had been well paid for his work at San Pedro, but what would a few thousands do—for him? Then it came to him that his plan of ruining Isabel and Wentworth would cut him off from even that source of income—would leave him, in fact, without any means whatever of gratifying the tastes which made up his life. The absolute folly of the whole affair so overcame him that he canceled his order for a pint of vintage champagne and, hurriedly paying his check, left the dining room. He went out into the hall and began feverishly to hunt up Wentworth's address in the telephone book. It was not far off, and he hastily summoned a taxicab and gave the man the number. If he could arrange with Wentworth to go back to Mexico and conclude his negotiations for the sale of the property, or manage it, if a sale were decided unadvisable—Under the circumstances he felt sure that he could demand almost any compensation he chose as a price for his silence. In his anxiety to conclude the matter in this way he leaned out and ordered the driver to hurry. Within fifteen minutes he was in Wentworth's rooms.

Robert entered Wentworth's library with an expression of cool defiance, for he felt that he was about to play a game which had for its stake his entire future. Had he realized Wentworth's state of mind, he would have been less doubtful as to the result. The latter looked at him searchingly, but said nothing.

"Good evening," said Robert shortly, and stood gazing at the lawyer, uncertain as to how to begin. Wentworth had thrust the revolver into his pocket, with the firm intention of killing Robert Maxwell before he would

allow him to leave the room with any intention of carrying out his diabolical threats. So for a space of half a minute they stood observing each other, like two men in the ring, each waiting for the other to make an opening. Wentworth spoke first. "Sit down," he said shortly.

Robert sank into a chair, and his eyes took in the disordered condition of the room, wandering over to the corner where the traveling bag, exuding a varied assortment of clothing, bulged with hidden meaning, but he was not acute enough to deduce the reason for these things. Suddenly he looked at Wentworth. "I came to see you about the mines," he said, but Wentworth only nodded, making no reply. He was now the shrewd, practical lawyer, making no admissions, economical of words, letting the other man do the talking.

"You got the letter I sent you from Mexico about the condition of affairs at the mines?" continued Robert, feeling somehow that he was not getting along very well.

Wentworth nodded. "Yes," he said shortly.

"Since I wrote you," Robert went on, "the English syndicate, the Pennington crowd, you know, have offered ten millions for the property."

Here was news indeed, important news, had Wentworth's mind been free to deal with the subject independently of other and more vitally important considerations.

"It is worth more," he answered mechanically. What was the meaning, he wondered, of all this talk about mines? He tried to act as though he knew nothing of Robert's intention to ruin him.

"Perhaps I can get more if you care to leave the negotiations in my hands," Robert said earnestly—"another million at least. The question is: what do I get out of it?"

A light began to illuminate the darkness in Wentworth's brain. To his trained mind this was clearly an offer of silence for a consideration. His inward joy was so great that he found

difficulty in keeping the note of exultation from his voice as he replied: "What do you want out of it?"

"If I effect the sale," said Robert, carefully weighing his words, "I want five per cent of ten millions, and one-half of all I get over that. If I manage the property and operate it, I want twenty-five thousand dollars a year."

Wentworth listened to these terms without the twitching of a muscle. After all, they were far lighter than he had expected. What would they have been, he wondered, had Robert fully grasped the importance to him, of suppressing the story of the events connected with Colonel Maxwell's death? No doubt his long absence from New York had kept him out of touch with the political situation, except in a very general way.

"You ask a great deal for your services," he remarked. "I do not know that Mrs. Maxwell will value them so highly."

Robert flushed angrily. "I am quite sure she will," he answered significantly, "quite sure. I am in a position to do her a great favor, and under the conditions I 've named I am ready to act entirely in accordance with her wishes. I am quite sure she will consent to the arrangement."

Wentworth, without replying, drew a few sheets of legal paper toward him, searched out his inkstand and pens from among the accumulated mass of documents upon the desk and for several minutes wrote intently. Then, blotting the sheet, he handed it over to Robert. "Is this memorandum of the matter correct?" he inquired.

Robert read it carefully. "Substantially," he replied; "but I do not see why you have made the payment of the money which would become due me extend over four years."

"It is the period of my office as District Attorney, in case I am elected," said Wentworth, and his tone and manner left no room for doubt as to his meaning.

Robert's cheeks burned a dull red, and for the moment he seemed about to make an angry reply. It was evi-

dent that Wentworth did not trust him; that his silence was to be insured, not for the moment, but permanently—at least beyond a time when the information he possessed could do either Wentworth or Mrs. Maxwell any particular harm. On second thought he decided to let the implied insult pass. He expected to clear up at least a million dollars from the transaction, and, after all, if he had the income from it, as the memorandum provided, delay in getting the principal into his possession did not materially matter. "It is satisfactory," he said shortly, and returned the paper to the lawyer.

Wentworth placed it carefully upon the desk by the side of an envelope containing the tickets he had purchased for Isabel and himself to Cincinnati. Then he rose. "I will see Mrs. Maxwell tonight," he said, "and I think, with you, that she will probably agree to the terms. If you will come here tomorrow at ten, I think we can conclude the arrangements satisfactorily."

Robert rose and turned to the door. "I will be here," he said as he went out. "Good night."

As for Wentworth, he felt as though he had suddenly become a boy again. He felt like dancing about and crying his joy aloud. He went over to his piano, inserted a roll of music, and with the loud pedal crushed under his foot, played the Pilgrims' Chorus from "Tannhäuser," in an outrageous *tempo*, drinking in triumphantly its ascending peals of sonorous exultation. Then he left the piano abruptly, and going to his desk, looked at his watch, filled his pipe, and, stretching himself luxuriously in his great leather armchair, awaited in delicious mental and bodily comfort the arrival of Isabel.

XII

ISABEL MAXWELL, unlike Wentworth, found no difficulty in adjusting her affairs in anticipation of the proposed flight from New York. She had her superfluous trunks taken to the hotel storage rooms, instructions as to

their subsequent shipment to follow by mail. She dismissed her maid with a handsome present after the latter had completed the packing of her steamer trunk and traveling bag. She was a woman of simple tastes, in spite of her wealth. Then she wrote a few notes canceling future engagements without explanation, and after ordering a taxi-cab for nine-thirty and paying her bill, sat down quite happy and contented to read a novel until the time should arrive for her departure. It was not that the importance of the affair failed to appeal to her, but she regarded the outcome as inevitable. She was satisfied with it, and, being a true philosopher, discharged its darker side from her mind in a contemplation of the happiness of joining her life with that of the man she loved. At ten minutes before ten she found herself ringing the bell of Wentworth's apartment with a feeling of inward trepidation, tempered with much joy at the thought of the happiness before them.

Wentworth opened the door for her and took her lovingly into his arms. "My precious girl," he murmured as he kissed her, "my precious, precious girl, I am so happy—so very happy!"

She looked at him curiously as she threw aside her coat. She had expected to find him somewhat silent and *difficile*, her woman's intuition telling her that to this much occupied man the breaking off of all ties would not be as easy as it had been to her.

"So am I, Roger," she said simply, then looked about the room. "Are you ready?" she asked anxiously, observing the half-filled traveling case in the corner and the piled-up desk.

Wentworth laughed boyishly. "Ready?" he said. "Yes, Isabel, my darling, I am ready—to tell you something which will make you the happiest woman in the world."

Her anxiety was but partially relieved, and there began to take form in her mind a horrid fear—a fear which expressed itself to her mental vision in the figure of poor, good-natured, gossipy Mrs. Chatterton, surrounded by a curious, interested crowd of sneer-

ing faces. She fumbled nervously with her gloves and looked at him.

"To tell me something?" she asked in growing anxiety. "What do you mean?"

Wentworth laughed again—that boyish, care-free laugh she had not heard for over a year. "Isabel, my dear, can't you guess?" he exclaimed. "Everything is all right now."

His laughter jarred upon her, as though someone had rasped her brain cruelly with the sound of a musical discord. Her eyes dilated, her breath caught in her throat; her face flushed hot and cold in turn. "What do you mean?" she gasped again. "Tell me, quick!"

"Robert has been here," he cried. "He came an hour ago, and everything is arranged. He has agreed to say nothing. Look!" He thrust the memorandum of their agreement into her nerveless hand. "You have only to sign that paper, and everything will be settled." He beamed upon her, his face glowing with the happiness which he thought to see reflected in hers.

Mechanically Isabel read the agreement through, although with little appreciation of its meaning. All this jumble of dollars and cents, of percentages and retentions intermingled with legal phraseology, meant nothing to her. The words swam before her eyes in a vague mist, through which she saw only the ever-recurring vision of Sallie Chatterton, surrounded by her galaxy of scandalmongers. Robert had said nothing, and she had told Mrs. Chatterton to talk—talk—talk—God, what a refinement of cruelty!

Suddenly she knew that Wentworth was bending over her. "My dear, dear girl," he was saying, "the shock has been too much for you. I ought to have been more considerate. Sit down here." He drew her to a place beside him upon a couch. "There, there, don't cry," he murmured softly. "It's all right; this terrible trouble is all gone now, my dearest. There is nothing left but our happiness." He folded her tenderly in his arms.

His burning kisses meant nothing to

her; she did not feel them. Through her brain ran a terrible realization of what she had done. Wentworth might yet be saved—thank God, she had not mentioned his name! But she—she was lost; and to marry him now, to go about with him, to be seen with him, even, must inevitably fasten the guilt upon him as she had fastened it upon herself. "The man I love," she had told Mrs. Chatterton, "the man I am going to marry—they will say he was my husband's murderer." The words choked in her throat. One thing she knew she must do: sign the agreement. That would save him, whatever became of her. She staggered to her feet, still clutching the paper in her hand, and went to the desk, oblivious of his wondering gaze.

"Give me a pen," she said hoarsely.

"But, Isabel, my dear, what is the matter?" he asked, following her in anxious alarm.

"Give me a pen," she replied.

He took up a pen from the desk, and, dipping it into the ink, handed it to her silently. Her emotions were infinitely beyond him; he looked at her in wonder as she tremblingly affixed her name to the document. Then she turned to him and in a dull voice said: "It is too late."

He hesitated, not understanding. "Too late?" he repeated. "Too late for what?"

Her eyes met his, and in them there was a light of infinite pathos. "I wanted the world to hear the story right," she said pitifully. "I wanted them to know the truth about me, and about you. I was too proud of your sacrifice—I wanted the story told to the world as it really was, and not as those vile newspapers would represent it. I was mad with joy and happiness because of your wonderful love for me. I wanted to tell the story myself before I went away. I wanted my friends and yours to understand. I have told Mrs. Chatterton."

Wentworth staggered back as though her words had been a blow in the face. All the happiness he had nursed in his heart during that half-hour with his

pipe, that wonderful half-hour which, like a miracle, had restored to him the whole structure of his existence, was swept away in a mad chaos of destruction. His face grew pale, then flamed red with anger. The revulsion had been too great. For a moment he lost control of himself. "You fool!" he cried bitterly. "You fool!" He stood and gazed at her with unseeing eyes.

Isabel shrank from him in dismay—a dismay which slowly gave place to anger. To her, equally, a great revulsion had come. All that Wentworth's love, all that his great sacrifice had meant to her, seemed as nothing now that he had failed her in this crucial moment. She felt that he had denied her, had thrust her love aside, leaving her to bear alone the consequences of her folly—a folly which she felt deserved a nobler name, since it was but a natural outcome of the love which she bore for him, and her pride in it. In silence they faced each other, and to her, as she stared at him, her cheeks pale, her eyes widening with horror, there came a sense of injustice, of bitter, cruel injustice.

Presently Wentworth, muttering, half to himself, half to her, a few broken words of apology, of regret, went slowly toward the desk, his manner dazed and uncomprehending. He took from it the envelope containing the tickets and handed it to her. "Here are the tickets," he said brokenly. "We must hurry. The train leaves in half an hour." He seemed unwilling to face her steady, questioning glance, and turning, busied himself with the contents of the half-packed grip.

Isabel regarded him with mounting anger. What triumphant expedition into the realms of love could she make with this man, who set his work before his happiness, who, it seemed to her, now planned to run away with her only because there was nothing else that he could do? She forgot that in this respect the situation was not in the least altered from what it had been three hours before—when they both had planned to leave New York for the same reason. She did not realize

the greatness of Wentworth's ambitions, the devotion and self-sacrifice with which he had entered into this fight for the cause of reform; nor did she fully appreciate the suddenness of the blow with which she had laid low his so recently revived hopes.

Her anger, for the time being, crowded all the tenderness of love from her mind. She felt a deep sense of scorn for him, for mankind in general. And as she gazed at him, a thought came to her, a sudden determination to throw upon him the deciding of his future and hers. He did not know that she had not told Mrs. Chatterton his name—that, with the agreement with Robert, he could remain and carry on his campaign to a victorious conclusion. She determined to tell him—and then to let him make his choice. Leaning over the desk, she took up the agreement and went over to him. "You need not bother to pack your things," she said in coldly scornful tones. "Here is the price of your safety." She flung the paper at him disdainfully, and it slowly fluttered to the floor. Wentworth looked at it with indifference. He still seemed in a daze, unable to comprehend the greatness of his disappointment. "It's not of much use now," he answered grimly.

Isabel grasped her coat and, rushing to the door, placed her hand upon the knob. "You are wrong," she said, "quite wrong. Mrs. Chatterton can do you no harm, for I did not tell her your name." As she concluded, she threw open the door and started from the room.

Wentworth, with a start, suddenly came to himself and sprang forward. "Where are you going?" he cried in great agitation.

"To the train," she replied coldly, as she swept out. "You can follow me, or remain, as you choose." Before he fully realized it, she was gone, leaving him, confounded, staring after her.

To Wentworth, standing thus between two great desires of his life, but a single coherent idea detached itself from the mad whirlpool of thoughts which swept through his brain: the

knowledge that the choice between these two courses of action, the choice which must inevitably make or mar his whole future life, must be made within a few fleeting moments.

He knew that there was no time for reflection, for weighing the pros and cons of the matter. Isabel had gone to the station. If he joined her there before the train left, he knew she would forgive his momentary anger; if he did not, she was lost to him beyond all hope. On the one side lay love and happiness, the whole sweetness of life as he had dreamed of it for over two years. On the other were duty and honor—to stand by his colors, to win in the great fight which he had undertaken, to keep faith with all those who had intrusted their political hopes to his care.

The ticking of the clock upon the mantel vied with the pounding of his heart in reminding him of the flying moments. Suddenly the jingling of the telephone bell startled him by its unexpected and peremptory call. He stepped to the desk and took up the receiver. It was a call from political headquarters, reminding him impatiently that they had been waiting for him for nearly an hour; that important matters, vital to the success of the campaign, must be discussed, and that his immediate presence was imperative.

He glanced at the clock. It marked ten minutes past ten. If he started at once he could reach the station in time

to overtake Isabel and catch the train. He reached over and took up the satchel; the perspiration stood in drops of agony upon his forehead. Every beat of his heart seemed to call out: "Isabel—Isabel—Isabel!" A picture of her, going out thus alone into the night to a far-off country, smote him with a sickening sense of pain.

He turned toward the door, and then, in a flash, came another picture: the bare, businesslike room at headquarters, where he had worked so faithfully all through the summer; the faces of Collins, of Tracy, of McCubbin, of Meyer, of Hall—earnest, careworn, haggard faces—the faces of men who had brought to this fight all their manhood, all their honor, their enthusiasm, their faith in him and their cause. He groaned aloud, then raised the heavy satchel in a burst of rage and swung it with a crash upon the desk, sweeping papers, inkstand, telephone, everything in a whirling mass upon the floor. "My God, I can't—I can't!" he cried. He seized his coat, crushed his hat upon his head and rushed to the elevator. In a few moments he was at the entrance, summoning a cab.

"Where to, sir?" asked the cabman respectfully, as he drove up. He was one of the hotel cabmen and had served Wentworth frequently.

"Headquarters," cried Wentworth savagely, as he fell back upon the softly cushioned seat, and, gritting his teeth, tried vainly to choke back the hot, unbidden tears.



GENERALLY when you make a mistake you are expected to correct it; but if it is a matrimonial one, you are expected to deny it and stick to it.

MODESTY is the result of a man's fear that others won't think him as great as he thinks himself.

December, 1908—3

A CHRISTMAS VAMPIRE

By CAROLYN WELLS

A FOOL there was, and he made a gift,
(Even as you or I.)
He bought it with taste and care and thrift
(For a lady his friends thought rather swift)
And when he gave it, the lady sniffed,
(Even as you or I.)

Oh, the judgment and taste and time we waste
On the gifts at Christmastide,
Which we give to the lady who isn't pleased
(And now we know she could never be pleased
And never be satisfied.)

A fool there was, and he gave his cheque
(Even as you or I.)
For a necklace of pearls without a fleck,
(And it didn't the least suit the lady's neck)
And she never thanked him a single speck!
(Even as you or I.)

Oh the chink we lose and the think we lose,
On the things we buy with pride
To give to the lady who never is pleased,
(And now we know she can never be pleased
And never be satisfied.)

The fool was fleeced to his last red cent,
(Even as you or I.)
She threw him aside, when his gold was spent,
(And nobody cared where the lady went.)
And the fool gave way to loud lament,
(Even as you or I.)

And it wasn't the loss, and it wasn't the dross,
The reason that same fool cried;
It was coming to know that she never was pleased,
(Seeing at last she could never be pleased
And never be satisfied.)

McDOUGALL

By JAMES BARR

RENE MONTAGUE placed his forearms along the top of the gate, his chin on his wrists, and gazed at the house. The house gazed back at Rene Montague. It was a square, plain, honest-faced house, standing back two hundred feet from the Suffolk highway. The uncurtained windows beamed benevolently. A rudely painted board stuck over the gate invited would-be tenants to inquire at an address in Bucklersbury, London.

"My spot!" exclaimed Montague.

At this instant a motor purred up, stopped, and the driver, shoving goggles to forehead, cast a searching glance at the house and its lovely grounds. Then he asked:

"I say, my man, can I get to see over this house?"

Rene Montague slowly surveyed the motorist, then slowly made answer:

"My man, you can. My man, there are two ways of doing so. My man, the first is for you to float that hic-cough spasm of yours up to London, get the keys and float back again. My man, the second way is to get full weigh on your stammering tremulosity and butt in the front door. I recommend the second way, my man."

The motorist waited for no more. He told Rene Montague where to take the house and to betake himself, then disappeared in a cloud of dust.

Three days later Rene Montague strode into the estate agents' office in Bucklersbury.

"I'm after a house of yours," he said jauntily to the grave head of the firm. "You may never have heard of

me, but that's a disadvantage I will quickly get you from under."

He passed over his card.

"The 'R. B. A.' thereon stands for Royal Society of British Artists; the 'R. I.' for Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolors, and the other initials for Royal Society of Painter-Etchers. There is a lot of royalty about me, but, to show you I am still among the people, I may say I'm a member of the London Sketch Club, an irresponsible democratic body, you know. I'm after a house of yours."

The agent scanned the initials, then said:

"Are these submitted as evidences of your financial or your artistic standing?"

"Both," exclaimed the irrepressible artist, "both. Unlike the milkmaid, my name is my fortune. I give my credentials that you may know at once there is to be nothing mercenary in our relationship. I want your house, and have no money."

"I sometimes walk along the Embankment at nights," said the agent drily.

"Ah, poor beggars! But the wretched benchers have no letters after their names; I have. Now, there's a house to let in Suffolk called Ivy Dean. It is a great many miles from anywhere, and a great many more from London, yet you blandly ask a perhaps-tenant to journey to London for particulars. He won't."

"You have."

"Bless you, I'm not a perhaps-tenant. I'm an applicant for a job."

"Yes?"

"Appoint me caretaker of that

house. In my best R. B. A. style I'll paint 'Caretaker Within' across a front window. Instruct me in the virtues of the place, tell me the rent, and I'll camp out and paint Suffolk. While your property is unoccupied I'll make it famous, and it won't cost you a penny, for I ask no wages."

Then he told of his meeting with the motorist.

A week later Rene Montague occupied Ivy Dean. He seized a large room whose windows faced the immutable north, and converted it into a studio. In a room above this he placed a shake-down. The rest of the house remained untouched except the kitchen, where a simple Suffolk lass from the nearest farm worked two days a week providing the artist's fare. In delightful chaos he gipsyed, painting during the day and spending an odd evening at the Raven Inn with the yokels. Autumn blew past, and Rene Montague became so enamored of Suffolk that he ordered in coal for a winter's siege. Those who knew Suffolk in winter realized that the artist's love for the place was genuine.

Two weeks before Christmas Montague wrote five letters, each worded like the others. They ran:

You are mine for ten days beginning the day before Christmas Eve. Bring McDougall. I want your help on Christmas Eve. Remember McDougall. No excuse accepted. Bring McDougall sure. Slip a couple of rugs into your bag, as I am short of bed-clothes. Do not fail to bring McDougall. Don't trouble to answer this, but bring McDougall.

Each recipient—Dudley Churcher, Cecil Starr, Adrian Lawson, Dulac Hankey and Fowler Reynolds—read the letter to McDougall.

McDougall said nothing.

From Ipswich the guests rode to Ivy Dean in a brake, the Suffolk folk wondering at a bean feast in December. Montague flung open the gate, and as Jehu swung his brake along the drive five artists stood up and cheered lustily. The sixth sat smoking stolidly. He was McDougall.

"McDougall," said Montague, when the brake emptied, "McDougall, I

could have spared the others, but you never. Shake."

They shook hands, McDougall saying nothing.

It was a hilarious band that crowded into a roomy hall as devoid of decoration as the Sahara of water lilies. At length Montague managed to work his way to the front of his guests.

"Gentlemen," he said grandly, "allow me to show you your rooms. I have paired you off, three rooms among the six of you. This way, please."

Up the loud-sounding stairs they tramped, each carrying his bag, and the host threw open three doors. The guests gazed flabbergasted at rooms as bare as polished granite. Cecil Starr whirled on Montague.

"Where's the bed?" he demanded.

"Ah, where?" mused the host dreamily. "I fail to see a bed. Thank my stars, I promised you no bed."

"Thunder!" bawled Dudley Churcher; "your hospitality is too, too lavish. Sure you can spare the room?"

"Quite sure," replied Montague, hastening downstairs for fear delay might make walking unnecessary.

Instantly, at a powwow, five men talked simultaneously, discussing wrecking the house, throwing Montague in the pond and tramping back to Ipswich. McDougall said nothing. Presently they all descended the stairs to the studio, whither Montague had gone, sat around, got pipes going and shot villainous glances at their host.

"Time flies, gentlemen," said Montague warningly.

"Let her fly. She mellows things by flying. Perhaps she'll make those floors softer," growled Adrian Lawson.

Montague strode to a corner and threw each guest a huge, coarse sack.

"Let's assist her to soften," he said. "I'll show you where stands a stack of exquisitely clean straw. Fill each to suit his ribs, and I'll guarantee you sleep sound as forgotten drums."

Five artists protested that a laborer should have done the job for them; the sixth, McDougall, said nothing. Taking his sack, he followed Montague in

silence, and the others, finding growlings unheeded, followed McDougall. Before their mattresses were filled the spirit of the decoration and utility seized upon the artists, and by the time Montague, the cook, dished the chicken potpie, the house stood embellished past knowledge. Ivy, holly, laurel were everywhere; on the walls of the great dining room, done in charcoal, stood a complete set of portraits representing Montague's ancestors from Adam and Eve Montague, reaching through Noah Montague, Early Britain Montague, down to Rene Montague himself. When the host discovered this gallery he recognized in it material for a compensation claim from the estate agent.

It was not till long past midnight that Montague gave the command:

"To your mangers, O men of straw!"

Christmas Eve, two o'clock in the afternoon, and Montague and his guests anxiously awaited the arrival of the Christmas fare from Ipswich. On a sudden out went the sun. Down upon the land with the fury of a stooping hawk swooped a north wind; then sleet and snow slid down, the blast striking upon the window panes like pellets from a blowgun. Windows rattled, doors banged and occasionally a tile flopped over and over, to meet destruction against a tree. Such a storm raged as even Suffolk had not experienced for a century. Rene Montague stood in the kitchen, hands deep in pockets, and silently contemplated a lone ham that hung from an oak beam.

"That's tomorrow's dinner," he muttered.

"Have you nothing better in the house?" asked Dulac Hankey.

"Nothing better and nothing worse. That's the entire commissariat."

"Then if I ever get back to London I'll join the Jews," vowed Reynolds.

As they stood contemplating the ham there suddenly thundered at the front door a mighty rat-rat. Every man dashed for the hall to cheer the arrival of the Ipswich tradesman, and

keeping his shoulder to the door, Churcher snubbed it open. Into the hall blew an apparition. It was dressed in leather, wore a bearskin round its neck and its face was covered by a horrible mask pierced with huge goggles. This stood staring at the group of artists and at the uncarpeted hall.

"John, how dare you bring my car out in this weather?" demanded Cecil Starr when he caught his breath.

Then the chauffeur realized that indeed he had happened on a lunatic asylum.

"I know you," exclaimed Adrian Lawson, bursting through the crowd. "You're one of Montague's ancestors in armor come to stand in the hall."

"Pay no attention to anyone. They're all crazy. Come in to the fire," said the host reassuringly.

When the chauffeur beheld the great dining room, with its boards on trestles for a table and its charcoal ancestors, his desire to get back to nature became desperate. He hesitated to enter the room.

"Come to the fire and thaw out," insisted Montague.

The man demurred. He said he didn't want a fire. What he did want was a spade to dig his car out of a snowbank.

"What's the use of digging out of one bank only to fall into another? Be fair. By all that's just, the car belongs to the first drift that catches it. Be fair."

"But Lady Mary is—"

"What!"

This interjection, yelled forth from each man's throat, nearly cracked the ceiling. McDougall alone stood out of the chorus. He said nothing. Then Fowler Reynolds reached forth a long, lank arm, and, placing his hand on the chauffeur's shoulder, bent down and peered into the man's goggles.

"Did — you — mention — a — lady? What do you mean?"

"I mean," said the chauffeur defiantly, "I mean that Lady Mary Hassell is waiting in the snowstorm for me

to get the car going. I want the loan of a spade—”

Two seconds later the poor man was legging it as fast as he could fly, barely keeping ahead of the artists, who poured through the door like a pack of hounds through a gap in a wall. All save McDougall. Quietly he put down his pipe and soberly got down his feet. First he set the kettle on the dining room fire, roasted out cup and saucer and cut some thin bread and butter and lusty slices of cake. Then down from the studio he took the one easy chair in the house and placed it by the side of the fire; next he rifled Starr's bed of an elaborately colored rug and threw it over the chair. He got a soap box from the kitchen, wrapped it in Hankey's gorgeous neckcloth and placed it as a footstool. He snatched up a stump of charcoal and clothed Adam Montague in a thirty-shilling suit, and Eve Montague in a tailor-made walking dress. Then he picked up his pipe and, sitting down, waited.

Breasting the gale, the artists at length came upon the motor. It looked in the snowstorm like a rock in raging surf, a car of magnificent proportions. And in the covered-in part sat a girl, handsome as Youth, and young as Beauty and enveloped in magnificent furs. She sat unruffled as Justice. The chauffeur opened the door wide enough to admit his head.

“Treason!” said Starr to his comrades. “He's advising her to refuse our invitation. I know he is. Treason!”

Crowding round, they saw the girl shoot a questioning, almost frightened glance at them.

“You fellows cut back! You're enough to frighten Cleopatra,” barked Montague savagely.

“Thank you, Antony,” replied Hankey, “but we'll continue to form your bodyguard.”

The chauffeur slammed the door shut, put his back against it and folded his arms in defiant determination. The girl kept her eyes on the multitude. Montague saw it was a moment for diplomacy.

“I say, chauffeur, you must not allow the lady to endanger herself in this pneumonia-laden storm, you know.”

“See you don't catch pneumonia yourself. You look after yourself and Lady Mary'll look after herself,” said the chauffeur spunkily.

“But, thunder, you know—” continued Montague.

Adrian Lawson seized his chance. Slipping round to the storm side, he quietly opened the door.

“Lady Mary,” he said softly.

The girl, starting violently, turned swiftly.

“Lady Mary,” Lawson continued in his smoothest tongue—and it was smooth, for he painted portraits—“Lady Mary, I am sorry this inconvenience has befallen you. Fortunately the house is near, and we have a rousing fire.”

The girl, finding herself addressed by one apparently rational, seemed greatly relieved. She answered:

“I shall be quite comfortable here, thank you. The storm will soon blow over.”

“Were the storm to cease this instant, your predicament would be as great. Suffolk is one vast snowbank. But the storm must last for hours yet. We cannot have you catch your death of cold at our very doorstep, Lady Mary.”

The girl was silent. Lawson rightly interpolated this as wavering.

“Allow me to show you the way while my friends are discussing the weather with the chauffeur. Please take my arm, for the wind is violent and has brought on sudden darkness.”

“Is there a woman in the house?” she asked pointedly.

“The housekeeper, McDougall—quite an old woman, I assure you,” prevaricated the artist.

“Yes, I'd better go in,” she said. “Thank you very much.”

Lady Mary stepped lightly out, and before the others noticed her absence Lawson had her halfway to the house. When McDougall opened the door all the rest were at the girl's heels.

Lady Mary Hassell gazed about her

amazed. In all the twenty-two years of her life she had never beheld such a sight. The unfurnished house, the brown paper pasted over windows understudying curtains and the group of eager, unconventional young men—well, for a few horrible moments she feared she had fallen among brigands and would be held for ransom.

"Excuse the state of the room, Lady Mary," said Montague cheerfully. "You see, we are living the simple life."

"Nothing like as simple as we shall be obliged to live if this storm continues," interpolated Reynolds.

"You've caught us in the midst of housecleaning; that's the truth of the matter."

"We've had the brokers in—"

"They allow us in an unpadded room now—"

Lady Mary Hassell glanced from one speaker to the other, and everywhere met frankly genial faces. Suddenly the ridiculousness of the situation swept over her, and she laughed a merry laugh, flinging herself into the easy chair.

"I'm sure I can't fathom what has happened; but here I am," she said, more to herself than to the company. Then she asked: "When do you think the storm will cease?"

"Let's hope by New Year," answered Starr optimistically.

The girl looked dumfounded.

"Whatever is to become of me?" she ejaculated.

"We have still one ham left. When that's finished we'll boil McDougall. Come forth, McDougall, and make the tea which you so thoughtfully have prepared for our guest. McDougall, come forth!"

Slowly the ponderous McDougall came forth, and when the girl's eyes fell upon him she half rose, then stammered:

"I thought you said—"

Checking herself, she shot one glance of red anger at Lawson, then turned her gaze upon McDougall. His rough-hewn features, his bearlike figure, his great hands and feet, his heavy tweed

suit, his everything personified sanity, strength of mind, strength of body and masterfulness.

"There is complete safety in the presence of this man," said the girl to herself. "I can now rest easy and wait for the storm to blow itself out."

As McDougall placed the teapot within her reach the girl spoke:

"Thank you, Mr. McDougall. It is most thoughtful of you."

McDougall looked her frankly in the eye, bowed his acknowledgments and said nothing.

The chauffeur, carrying a bundle of rugs, shuffled in half blinded. Montague led the man to the kitchen fire and drew him a glass of beer. McDougall followed, threw off his coat and began washing the luncheon dishes. Montague dried them.

"Who is Lady Mary Hassell?" asked Montague of the chauffeur.

"Second daughter of Earl Broads."

"The deuce she is! I feared she might be the wife of some bread and butter knight. Single?"

The man shot an old-fashioned glance at Montague and nodded.

"Good for her! Let's see, the Earl's seat is to the north of Ipswich, is it not?"

Lawson entered to see if he could be of assistance. Since the "housekeeper" incident he had not felt comfortable. Montague continued:

"How can we let the Earl know that his daughter is in safe keeping?"

"Is Lordship 'as a telephone from Ipswich. The postmaster sends 'im on any wire that comes. Where's the telegraph office about 'ere?"

"Telegraph office? Two miles distant. Might as well be two hundred tonight. No man could flounder there. I wish it were possible, for halfway to the post office is a cottage where lives a most accomplished poacher, who would roust out for us a few brace of pheasants for Christmas dinner, silence and a consideration. But you can't fetch the post office tonight."

"Then that's off," grunted the man, mightily relieved.

Montague pawed over the bundle of rugs brought in by the chauffeur, then, turning to Lawson, said:

"Take these upstairs and try your hand at changing my room into a lady's bower. She'll appreciate having her own rugs on her bed. And I say, chauffeur, you might lend a hand by lighting a fire in the bedroom."

The two disappeared upstairs.

"An earl's daughter, McDougall, an earl's daughter!" exclaimed Montague. "Think of it! For heaven's sake enthuse! An earl's daughter! Most poetic grade, caste, classification, shade, computation or whatever you like to call it, of the nobility and gentry! McDougall, say something! Say anything!"

McDougall said nothing. He grimly washed dishes. Montague contemplated his companion hopelessly, then tossed his head. "I'll put that ham on to boil," he said.

An hour later, when Montague and McDougall reentered the dining room, they saw at a glance that their fair guest sat quite at her ease. She had pushed her chair further from the fire, and her feet, exquisitely shod, rested on McDougall's improvised footstool. Everyone was in a merry mood, even Lawson, down from acting the chambermaid, having been forgiven for his lapse from truth. They had been discussing McDougall, and that worthy quickly learned that his name alone, out of those of all the artists present, was known to the girl, Lady Mary having seen his great picture at the last International Show. The girl insisted on everyone to his pipe, and McDougall, as he puffed at his, gazed at the girl with manifest pleasure. Indeed, she was a superb girl, a right down luscious Suffolk girl, and Suffolk is the county for girls and roses. Time passed quickly, and about half past five Hankey shoved his head out of doors to report on the weather. He returned shaking that head. The weather was impossible.

Montague lighted a candle.

"We have started a fire in your room, Lady Mary," he said. "Perhaps

you would like to see the room and let us know if you lack anything."

The girl rose and took the candle, Montague continuing:

"The room is on the third floor, first door to the left of the landing."

But McDougall had risen. Without a word he took the candle from the girl's hand and straightway marched up the stairs, holding the light so that it illuminated the way behind him. The girl hesitated not one instant, but followed, and two minutes later McDougall reentered the dining room, set down the still smoking candle and again left the room. They heard him pause in the hall, then make his way back in the direction of the kitchen.

Half an hour later the girl came down. With her furs she had laid aside all her fears.

"As cozy as possible. Thank you very much," she exclaimed in reply to a question. "The fire burns delightfully. And now that I have so much, I desire more. Let me turn cook."

"Have you seen the kitchen?" gasped Starr. "Montague's been cook for the last year or so, and, oh, that kitchen! Today I came upon an unwashed saucer containing strawberries and cream! I only hope they were last season's strawberries and cream."

The girl insisted. She made for the door, and no one was so ungallant as to bar her way.

"But, Lady Mary, there's not a thing in the house to cook except one ham, and that's on to boil."

"We'll see," she replied laughingly. "Please show me the way."

One glance of dismay she cast at the chaos, then rolled up her sleeves. First she made a mental inventory of the resources.

"Nothing but ham? Why, there are the foundations for a feast. Now for the superstructure," she said.

"It'll be chiefly superstructure if I know our commissariat," muttered Montague.

Apples! Dudley Churcher and Dulac Hankey were set to peeling and paring. Sugar! Cecil Starr found himself grinding a pound of lump into

granulated. Potatoes! Adrian Lawson washed potatoes and put them in the oven to bake. Montague was obliged to roust out flour and jam, and Fowler Reynolds grimly scoured the knives and forks. The girl herself was soon elbow deep in flour, making jam patties and apple tarts. The chauffeur was sent to keep the dining room fire company.

In the very height of the bustle Reynolds suddenly exclaimed:

"Where's McDougall?"

Work ceased as if in obedience to an imperative "Whoa." McDougall had not been seen for an hour.

"Shirking!"

"McDougall shirking? Never!"

"Then produce him!"

They searched the house, and no McDougall. The girl looked alarmed, but Montague had been given time to concoct.

"Hundred to one he's gone to his room. He's a peculiar man, Lady Mary, and instead of taking a shake-down in this house he has made himself comfortable in the coachman's loft. I'll see if there are tracks in the snow."

Returning from his investigation, the truthful host continued:

"As I thought. I find his tracks, so he's all right."

"I hope he has not ventured out because—because of me," the girl said hesitatingly.

"Whenever McDougall ventures he wins," replied Hankey with forced cheerfulness.

All but the girl soon learned that Montague had indeed seen McDougall's footprints, but that they led, not to the coachhouse, but toward the highway, and the night was so wild they could not help but fear for McDougall. No night this to be abroad.

Nevertheless, they had a merry meal of it. Lady Mary insisted that one of them should visit the coachhouse—she wanted to have the chauffeur go, but Montague would not hear of such a thing—to tell McDougall that dinner was ready. Starr made the journey, and was back in a remarkably short time with word that McDougall was

comfortably in bed and preferred not to stir, as he felt tired after the day's work. So the meal went on without him, a meal much like a lady's evening dress, more frills than material. After the table was cleared the girl brewed delicious coffee, and the artists, like happy schoolboys, drew the long bench before the fire and told the girl, who sat in the cozy chair, experiences and happenings in which, to give them credit, there were occasional flashes of truth. Hankey found a brand new sketch book of McDougall's, and penciled in a portrait of Lady Mary, then passed the book on, and each man filled a page from the same model. It would be a remembrance for her.

The night deepened more rapidly than any of them thought.

On a sudden there sounded a great thud at the door. Each artist leaped to his feet and stood straining an ear. Following the thud was silence, then feeble knocking. All dashed for the hall. When the door was thrown open headlong in fell McDougall. As though in pursuit of its victim, the gale billo wed through the house until the doors slammed like cannon. Angry whirlwinds of snow whirled in to dance along the hall.

"Put your shoulders to that door!" bawled Montague as he dived to raise McDougall's head from the floor. "Someone bring the lamp!"

The instant the door closed Lady Mary Hassell stood in the hall holding the great lamp high above her head. Her face was ghostly pale, her lips compressed, but her hand shook not at all. Up they lifted McDougall and into the dining room they carried him, the girl backing her way in in front of them.

"Not too near the fire," she cried. "Not near the fire yet."

Placing the lamp on the broad mantelpiece, she swung her chair to the end of the room, and into this they dumped McDougall. His chin lay on his breast, but his eyes were wide open and keen with intelligence. The storm had beaten his muscles but never his will. Over his shoulder, like a cartridge belt, lay a rope, on which hung

three brace of pheasants, and crumpled in his right hand he clutched an orange-colored envelope.

McDougall had visited both poacher and post office.

A long while he sat limply, while Montague unfastened rope and overcoat, and Hankey beat the snow from trousers and boots with a hat. At last McDougall slowly raised his hand and held forth the envelope to the girl. Like a flash she knew it to be a wire from her father.

"Oh, you should not have ventured!" she cried, and, throwing the envelope unopened upon the table, she seized his hand and began to rub warmth into it.

The touch of her sent a thrill of life through the rugged frame of McDougall. He gave himself a mighty shake, then got upon his feet, dropped the overcoat into the chair on top of the pheasants and began slowly to pace the room, pausing now and again to rub his legs vigorously. Up to this time the silence of those present had been worthy of McDougall himself, but now Hankey, shaking his head like a fatally stricken bison, burst out:

"Oh, McDougall, McDougall! If ladies were not present I would take my life in my hands and call you a brilliant fool!"

McDougall said nothing.

Picking up the abandoned envelope, Lady Mary tore it open. After glancing at the wire she turned smilingly and said:

"My father is glad I have found shelter and begs to thank you all." Then she stepped quickly up to McDougall and held out her hand.

"This wire justifies me in sleeping soundly. I thank you."

Then, forgetting to say "Good night," she ran upstairs.

Next morning, Christmas morn, McDougall was the first man to disturb the chauffeur, who had slept before the kitchen fire. With nicest care McDougall made a cup of tea, then filled a can with hot water. Placing tea, freshly opened condensed milk and sugar on a tray, and taking the hot

water, he mounted to the girl's door. First knocking definitely, he put the can down with such a rattle that Lady Mary could not fail to understand that something awaited her outside the door. Then he trudged down to the kitchen to boil the porridge.

The storm had blown itself out, but Suffolk lay in a sorry plight, hedges obliterated, trees down and telegraph wires in weird festoons. It appeared as if Lady Mary's stay was bound to be prolonged, yet when the girl made her appearance she seemed in no wise appalled by the prospect of a longer stay. She appeared fresh as a Suffolk rose and blithe as a Suffolk lark—and where are their equals? McDougall, gallantly, had left her the coffee to brew; the rest of the meal, porridge mostly, was ready. At the merry breakfast some made allusion to the scene of the previous night. Occasionally McDougall joined heartily in the laughter, but, of course, he said nothing.

At the height of a bustling morning's preparation for a midday Christmas dinner, lo, again was McDougall found to be missing. This time his footprints led from the front door to the gate.

"I'll have that man on a collar and chain," vowed Montague savagely, as the artists crowded together at the door gazing at the blunt trail in the snow. "What's he after this time—shrimps?"

In delegation they waited on Lady Mary.

"Can you assist us to any sane explanation of that Highland sphinx's Arctic endeavor this time?" demanded Hankey.

The girl shook her pretty head.

"I cannot, but I know who can," she replied.

"Who?"

"Mr. McDougall."

They gazed at her blankly; then Starr said, as he turned away:

"I believe you're Highland yourself. I believe your name is Kirsty McNab."

Dinner time arrived. The pheasants were roasted to a turn and all ready,

yet no signs of McDougall. At the proposal to serve without waiting for McDougall Lady Mary Hassell mutinied, flatly, frankly mutinied. McDougall had missed last night's dinner; McDougall must not miss Christmas dinner. Dinner must wait on McDougall. At this, Churcher, graced with the longest legs, floundered to the gate and got upon the post, but no signs of McDougall. Next Starr, searching for an easy tree to climb, discovered a clock tower on the coach-house and mounted. There, but an eighth of a mile off, was McDougall, breaking a way through the snow and leading two saddle horses, one tied to the other's tail. The girl, surrounded by the artists, awaited the missing man at the door. As he plodded through the gate Lady Mary ran in to dish up dinner.

Waiting till she had disappeared, Montague sang out:

"Bravo, McDougall! But do you mind telling us how a lady in motor dress is going to ride on a side saddle?"

McDougall said nothing. He tied the leading mount to a birch tree, then, from the far side of the saddle, undid a bundle and, entering the hall, placed it on the fifth step. The riding habit!

That dinner! Not one of them will ever forget the jollity of it, no, not even though he should be elected to the Academy and crystallize, as is becoming, into propriety. The girl laughed till her sides ached.

As the clock struck two Lady Mary Hassell stood, her sealskin over the riding habit, all ready to mount. McDougall, well wrapped, held the mounts. The artists clustered around the girl.

"You must promise me one thing," she cried, her eyes dancing from face to face.

"I refuse," said Reynolds. "You're going to ask us not to murder McDougall for abetting your early flight. He dies!"

"He dies!" chorused the others.

The girl raised her gloved hand for silence.

"Then I know he'll die hard," she

said confidently. "But promise me, each one of you, that you will dine with me at Hassell Castle on New Year's Day."

"If you'll let us come to dinner one at a time. We have only one dress suit among us."

"Never mind dress," she laughed. "My father will be glad to meet you, and I shall be delighted."

"Do you think you can keep McDougall from chattering all the time?"

The girl held out her hand. They all pounced on it simultaneously and led her to her mount.

As the artists watched the two ride off, McDougall leading to break a path, Starr said:

"Looks like a Red Indian brave leading home a captive."

"Would I were a Red Indian brave!" muttered Reynolds.

Reynolds, Churcher and McDougall were obliged to run up to London before the New Year, and it was arranged that all should meet at Ipswich station on New Year's Day in time to catch the three o'clock train to Cherry Parva for Hassell Castle. At the appointed time all turned up—except McDougall. He was missing. Since his departure for London nothing had been seen nor heard of him.

"Unlike the simple child, we are not seven by a long shot," said Starr. "We are six, and I'll wager we'll be reminded of the fact when we next meet a certain earl's daughter."

"We're Egypt without the Sphinx," exclaimed Hankey.

"Well, it appears we're destined to enter the Promised Land minus Moses, but enter we must. We can't back out now," said Montague, and they filed into a compartment.

At Cherry Parva two of the Earl's carriages met the artists and drove them along the winding highway and up the broad drive to Hassell Castle. A profound butler admitted them, and a graven footman ushered them into a reception room, where, waiting to welcome, stood Lady Mary, lovely girl, all smiles and merriment. And there, there, by her very side, calm and collected, stood the villain, McDougall!

"There's a woman in this house," exclaimed the girl, as she hastened forward and offered her hand to Lawson, who was at the head of the line.

"And a man, too," said the irrepressible Starr, glancing at McDougall.

A blush, pleasant as the break of day, swept over the girl's cheeks. For one moment she stood in confusion, then turned and, with a wave of her hand toward McDougall, said:

"Allow me to present to you my affianced—McDougall."

Six jaws dropped, and six pairs of

eyes glared at McDougall. Then McDougall came forward and shook six hands at once, while six throats stammered simultaneous congratulations. Next McDougall shook six hands separately, smiling his broadest smile as he did so.

"Boys," said Starr, turning to his comrades, "boys, a great event will soon come to pass. At length we're about to hear McDougall speak. You know he's bound to say 'I will'!"

No one laughed more heartily than Lady Mary Hassell. As for McDougall, he said nothing.



A SONG OF OLD CITIES

By EDNA VALENTINE TRAPNELL

CITIES and queens are gone, you say,
So lordly living, so little dead,
And what can it matter upon a day
The troth we plighted, the vows we said?

We, who have but a day to live,
Take as a guerdon all it can give.
Laugh and lift up your lips to me—
Lovelier never had Lalage.

Long since in stately Nineveh
Was the garden of Semiramis.
Naught but a name is left of her,
And o'er her head the serpents hiss.

Winds that blew out of Yesterday
Bore her pomp and her power away.
When I, too, with the wind am gone,
Will a throb of my love in your heart live on?

In blood-stained peace and pomp of war
The chariots swept thro' Babylon.
Now Time, the unconquered conqueror,
Has left there but the rutted stone.

Time, more cruel than tyrant kings,
Tears from our arms the arm that clings.
Heart o' me, cling but the closer here,
Death defying, and doubt and fear.

DECEMBER PEACHBLOOM

By T. D. PENDLETON

RETURNING from a decade of wandering, I found some new people and houses in our neighborhood.

Art had long been my mistress, and few subjects extrinsic engaged me seriously—the possibilities of gilded newcomers not at all. I daily passed the gates of Doggett's estate without interest, but a neat white cottage with a half-acre of velvet lawn, a clipped hedge and a flower garden held my eye. I had been informed that the owner of the cottage was a lame foreigner, who was quite impossible from the social viewpoint. Now, people without social aspirations do interest me; besides, garden flowers are one of the old loves my jealous mistress permits. I grew into a habit of looking over the hedge while the lame gardener superintended his beds.

One day I praised his tulips. His reply struck me as singular.

"Oh, yes," he said, "my tulips are pretty enough, but nothing flowers that is so good as the peach blossom."

It was the same thing in lilac time, and when roses and lilies bloomed, the lame gardener admitted the beauty of his flowers grudgingly, and always with the addendum as to the superlative charm of peachbloom.

From the beginning, my nose scented romance; therefore, in chrysanthemum season, I was grateful to a sudden rain storm which caught me looking over the gardener's hedge and made me his guest for a twilight hour. I had just spoken of the extraordinarily brilliant colors of the flowers and received the reply: "Very pretty, yes, but nothing is so good as the peach blossom," when

a drop of rain splashed on my face. The old man looked up at the sky.

"It will storm greatly," he said. "Come into my house until the rain is over."

"I will accept your hospitality," I answered him, "upon the condition that you tell me why you never forget the peach blossom."

I did not speak flippantly; nor did the gardener smile as he said: "It shall be as you wish." Then he bowed gravely and led the way to the cottage.

The tiled kitchen was bright with story book copper and brass saucerpans, and a low fire burned on the wide hearthstone. Seen without the shadow of his hat, the face of my host was elusively familiar, not like any one face I had known, but like a hundred. He offered me a glass of water, and instantly I knew that my lame gardener had once been a hotel waiter.

He placed a very comfortable leather chair for me, but remained standing by the chimney himself, having replied, to my remonstrance, that he could thus best tell the story. For the most part his English was fair, his gesture, more than his speech, betraying the Gallic.

"My name is Henri Varet," he began, "and I have served in many hotels. For twenty years I was in London, after ten years of Paris. Then, after London, came Venice, Rome, Vienna, Cairo, a season or two of each, before my last service in New York. You will understand that I was thoroughly accustomed to seeing beautiful women. But one day of my last year in New York—it was in December, I remember, and the weather was ex-

ceedingly mild for that time of the year—a young lady wearing a long sable coat entered the café on the Avenue side of the Waldorf, where I was serving, and immediately it seemed to me that she was more beautiful than any of the others I had seen in London, Paris, Vienna, or even before in New York. The gentleman who accompanied the beautiful young lady was known to me. He was Mr. Van—ah—

“Goldening?” I suggested.

“Yes, Mr. Van Goldening the gentleman’s name may very well be. Well, then, on that too warm December day of my last service at the Waldorf Mr. Van Goldening brought with him to the café the beautiful young lady with the sable coat. Instantly I knew that she was new to the—ah—game, is it you Americans call life in New York?—and that she was wearing the sable coat for the first time. Perhaps, after all, it was the sable coat that made her strangely different from all the others I had seen before. Not because it was warm for sable—motoring was excuse enough for that—not the magnificence of the full length garment itself, for there were a half-dozen good sable coats in town that season—Mr. Van Goldening’s wife had one nearly as good as this one the young lady was wearing—no, it was not the sable itself; I think it was the face of the young lady rising out of the fur as if all of her but just that much were drowned in some black, black gulf.

“It was the quiet hour in the café on the Avenue side of the house, the crowd being in the tea room. When the two were seated at Mr. Van Goldening’s own table in the corner, the room was nearly empty; so I was able to serve the caviare in not more than a quarter of an hour, and I surprised Mr. Van Goldening in the middle of a sentence.

“‘The sable is not enough,’ he was saying. ‘A princess must have a rope of pearls.’

“That was always his way with women—I had served him a whole season before, you know—to put them

on a throne. I think that was why he always dined with the best-looking woman in the room opposite him. Other men lavished love gifts, too, many others, but he had the trick of making women think he regarded his millions as dross under their white feet. He usually conquered—won out, is it not that they say in New York?—before the salad course. But where was I? Ah, yes—that warm day in December when I was serving the caviare.

“I removed it, the caviare, with the little green and yellow wreath around the *canape* quite undisturbed; and of course I did not expect them to be long over the oysters, not with that baby spring breeze blowing in at the open window and fluttering the petals of the peach blossoms in the table vase. Ah, I had not yet told you of the peach blossoms?

“Our table decorator, little Marin, was Provence born, and he was the poet artist to the finger tips. Two days before, when the mercury had risen, he had said: ‘If this weather holds twenty-four hours, I may have peach blossom from Maryland.’ He was as enthusiastic as if he had taken a—flyer, is it?—in Wall Street. Well, the weather had held, as I have told you, and little Marin had got his peach blossoms. They had come that morning early, packed in hampers, and in an hour the café had bloomed like an April orchard. So it happened that Mr. Van—Van Goldening and the beautiful young lady with the sable coat sat at table with a vase of peach blossoms between them instead of the American Beauties we ordinarily used at that season.

“In long years of service one learns to see much without being seen to see. I liked to look at the beautiful face of the young lady in the frame of pink blossoms; but it was evident that the table decoration of which little Marin had been so proud did not please Mr. Van Goldening. However, when I was about to remove the vase, he divined that the lady liked the peachbloom. I heard him say:

“‘As a princess wills.’

"I lingered over the service of the entrée as long as I might. It had come to me that the manner of Mr. Van Goldening was different from what I had observed on any of the other occasions upon which I had served him. His dark, clean cut face wore its usual faint traces of his life, lines that by some marvel had not got beyond the point where they compelled interest rather than contempt; but his voice had not the usual tantalizing caress. Every word that he spoke to the beautiful young lady was like a kiss on her mouth. Was it possible that he cared? I had known when I seated them that she cared, as all women did for him; and that the beautiful head rising from the sable, as if all of her but just that much had been claimed by some black gulf, was barely able to keep itself up. Then, somehow, in my fancy the frame of peach blossom around her face had vaguely promised something. But, if he cared also— Dear God! Of what value would be the aura of a saint if it happened that Mr. Van Goldening cared?

"It was when I brought the *filet* that I saw the look in the eyes of the young lady, the look that I did not understand. Many times are beautiful eyes strangely bright or soft under the—pardon, monsieur—stimulus of alcohol, but the young lady had barely touched with her lips the glass into which I had poured the Yquem; yet the eyes in the white face of her—did I tell you that they were gray in light, purple in shadow!—had in them a look as of seeing the Unseen. Mr. Van Goldening was still speaking to her, his voice so low that I caught no word of what he said, but I was sure now that he did care.

"During the hour they had been at the table the young lady had spoken rarely and in monosyllables, yet when I came back with the salad I found her speaking:

"Yes, it was in Kentucky, in the foothills. In the early spring there the peach trees bloomed a tender pink like this'—she touched the spray in the vase with her finger tips. 'In some

years they were earlier than in others. I remember once when the purple promise of the buds was blighted. That was the year the feud took my father. When he rode to the county court house in the early morning, the peach trees in the coves were like the cheeks of a young girl. All day I was alone—in November it was that my brothers had been shot from behind the great rock at the ford—and all night I kept watch for the return of my father. When he was brought to me stark and dead, the pink bloom in the coves had shriveled to brown rags. I have not seen peach blossom since, until today, here. The convent was in the heart of the city, and charity pupils had no place to go in vacation time. In the year since the convent I have had no vacation. I must be quicker at office work than most; my employer has never been able to manage a single week without me.'

"Mr. Van Goldening spoke to me abruptly:

"'Serve the coffee.'

"As I have told you, I was able to serve quickly on the day of which I am speaking by reason of the room on the Avenue side of the hotel being nearly empty. When I brought the Turkish coffee the lady had ceased speaking, but she had still the strange, far-away look in the eyes, and she held a spray of the peachbloom against her mouth. Mr. Van Goldening was silent also; he barely touched his *demi-tasse* with his lips and asked for his check. He laid a bill on the tray and I hurried to the cashier.

"When I returned the two had gone. The fact of their going without waiting for change was in no way remarkable; but what was quite unaccountable to me was that the magnificent sable coat of the young lady lay on the chair she had occupied.

"I have made it plain that at that hour the room was nearly empty; I was able myself to run after them with the sable. The car of Mr. Van Goldening stood near the Thirty-fourth Street entrance, but he was about to assist the beautiful young lady into a taxicab.

"Pardon, monsieur," I said, "but madame's coat—"

"The beautiful young lady looked straight into the eyes of Mr. Van Goldening:

"I shall have no further need of the sable. A change in temperature has rendered it undesirable." The far-away look was yet in her eyes, and her ungloved fingers caressed the spray of peach blossom she held.

Mr. Van Goldening bowed gravely to her.

"As a princess wills—in all things," he said softly.

When the beautiful young lady had been driven away in the taxicab, Mr. Van Goldening signaled his own chauffeur. It was plain that he had forgotten me.

"Pardon," I said again, "but the coat of madame—"

"Take it to a good dealer, Henri. Don't let him cheat you. Its price will set you up against old age."

It was that night that I slipped on the ice. By midnight a warm rain had turned to sleet. At the age of sixty years a man can no longer be sure of his feet; it was at the crossing that I fell under the heavy dray.

Yet it is not because I do not eat the bitter bread of charity that I remember the peach blossoms always, nor because of this—" My lame host indicated with a wave of his free hand the snug cottage and garden. "No; it is that I like to think that the beautiful head of the young lady did not go down in the black gulf."



A SOUTHERN GARDEN

By LUDWIG LEWISOHN

THE tall, pale lilies tremble in the night
 Under the winds of undulating seas;
 In the soft heaven the clustered stars are white,
 And white the bloom of the magnolia trees;
 This is the garden of my soul at ease,
 Where the pale lilies tremble in the night.

O riotous bloom and wafture of soft scents,
 And keener fragrance of the plashing sea,
 Blended as though a hundred instruments
 Made musical the night's tranquillity—
 These lay adream the troubled heart in me,
 This riotous bloom, this wafture of soft scents.

And the impassioned garden waits for you,
 O flower lustrous, exquisite and pale!
 The mocking bird flutes the dark branches through
 Yearningly as the Thracian nightingale;
 My heart is still, knowing you will not fail,
 But the impassioned garden waits for you.

CONFESSiON

By EMMA LEE WALTON

MRS. ALONZO DUNBAR'S dinners were usually very brilliant affairs, but on that particular evening the girl and the young man halfway down the table seemed to ignore their manifest duty to be as entertaining as their limitations permitted. It was only when he caught a puzzled, though fleeting, expression on his hostess's usually complacent face that the young man addressed his dinner partner.

"I've heard of its happening in books," he said enigmatically, "but I never knew of it in real life before."

The girl did not raise her eyes from her plate, at which she gazed as at a surprising novelty which it was her duty to classify.

"To what particular circumstance do you refer?" she asked coldly. "I do not understand."

"To two young people who, having broken their engagement, are sent out to dinner together by the hostess."

She gave him a quick look.

"Nobody's been told our engagement is broken," she said. "That's why I think we should appear to be friends for this one evening, at least."

"If I were to be executed, I should be grateful for haste, if a reprieve were out of the question," he said lightly. "Since you offer the reprieve, I am glad to be friends, if only for a minute, though I don't understand the logic."

"I didn't know women ever had to be logical."

"I never did enjoy agony prolonged," he said slowly. "If we are to be friends no longer, why not let the idea be rumored among the guests?"

"I can't expect you to understand."

she sighed. "I suppose I don't like to be talked about."

"Then why did you break it at all?"

"One cannot marry a man just to avoid comment," she laughed. "Any-one can make mistakes; only the wise find it out in time."

"I never posed as wise."

"Discussion does not improve a bad matter," she declared impatiently. "It is broken, and there's an end to it. Let's talk of something else."

"Don't you think, with me, that it's never too late to mend?"

She shrugged one shoulder slightly and frowned. He awaited her answer breathlessly, but all she said was:

"Mr. Van Pelt is trying to speak to you."

The man in question was across the table, and his voice resounded with unnecessary force as soon as he had their attention.

"I was wondering what you two people were discussing," he said. "You looked so earnest."

"Proverbs," said the young man promptly. "Did you ever try to see if you could find a proverb for every letter in the alphabet?"

Mr. Van Pelt, easily satisfied, never had, and he and the young woman on his left began the game at once. As soon as they were occupied the girl spoke again.

"Evidently we shall have to smile occasionally," she said. "We don't want to seem to be settling the affairs of the nations."

"No, only our own."

"Ours are settled, so we won't discuss them, please," she said coldly.

"Don't frown so; smile like this. Isn't this bird delicious? What is it?"

"Tough," he said fiercely. "What may I talk about—the decorations, the guests, books or the weather?"

"Not the weather, please. You might laugh now; pretend that what I say is very funny."

"It hasn't sounded funny to me yet."

He appeared to think deeply for a moment, searching his memory.

"How about the drama?" he asked as with an inspiration. "Have you seen anything lately?"

"Not since night before last," she replied chillingly. "I believe you took me to something, didn't you?"

"I had that pleasure," he said elaborately. "Though I must be rude enough to confess I did not enjoy myself."

"I thought the play delightful."

"I haven't a very clear idea what it was. I felt all the evening that the hero was an idiot for quarreling with a girl like that. I declared to myself I never would have done it, and before we got home our engagement was broken."

"Whose engagement's broken?" asked the irrepressible Van Pelt. "Is it anybody I know?"

The young man would have given a fortune to be able to annihilate him with a glance, but his manner was cordiality itself.

"Nobody you care about," said he airily. "Fellow from Boston. Never met him myself."

The intruder turned his attention to his lady with a puzzled shake of his head.

"How could you tell such a story?" asked the girl reprovingly. "Aren't you ashamed?"

"Not when I remember that Van Pelt would give all he possesses to be sitting right here," he said savagely. "Besides, I was born in Boston. I consider Chicago better for the health, if not happiness. I weighed only thirty-six pounds when I came here, and look at me now!"

Underneath his banter there was something that disturbed her, and the

new expression in his dark eyes made her seize eagerly on the topic offered.

"Do you wish your family had stayed East?" she asked.

"No, I don't," he said boldly. "I should never have met you then."

"I don't want to talk about that. It does not matter now."

He gazed moodily at the elaborate centerpiece, and then smiled wistfully.

"But nothing can take away the good times we've had, can it?" he asked. "And it's worth while living here thirty years for that alone."

The girl forgot to stand by her topic and surrendered to his insistence.

"You'd have met someone else in Boston," she said gently. "And she would have been very, very charming."

"Somebody else wouldn't have been you."

"Naturally. So much the better."

"Possibly, from your point of view. Somehow, I can't imagine it. No one else would do."

He felt he was gaining ground, and began to build an air castle on it at once. If she would only say—

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the lady on the other side of the young man, "but I believe that is my glass of water you have."

The young man apologized, raging inwardly.

"I suppose she thinks I am a heathen," he said contritely to the girl. "That's the first time I have spoken to her this evening. I forgot she was there."

"The man on the other side of me is deaf," said the girl. "He has said 'Yes' and 'Indeed' to almost everything I've said to you."

"It can't have kept him very busy. You haven't said very much to me."

She had recovered her stand, however, and would not follow his cue. "This salad is delicious," she said fervently. "I must ask for the recipe."

"Salad already!" cried the young man. "You'll be leaving in a few minutes."

"I think I have been here quite long enough," she said calmly. "Are you invited to Miss Lewiston's wedding?"

"Yes, but I'm not going. It would seem like a funeral to me."

The girl raised her eyebrows, but a quick color flooded her cheeks and she turned her head away.

"Was she such a particular friend?"

The young man brightened suddenly and smiled.

"I never saw her," he said. "The groom invited me. But I can't bear to see other people made happy when I can't be."

"You did not seem to mind the prospect the other evening."

"Mind!" he cried sharply. "I was like one distracted all day yesterday, and felt like a lost soul all last evening."

"If it is merely a question of where to spend your evenings," she ventured, "why don't you try your club?"

"Now you're laughing at me," he said gloomily. "You don't know how confoundedly miserable I am."

"You look it," she laughed. "Put on a smile or Mr. Van Pelt will say something."

"Give me something to smile about," he pleaded. "I've suffered enough."

"Be good, for I have to go in a min-

ute, and you ought to leave a pleasant impression."

"That isn't a mirthful subject," he said. "You haven't been very good to me."

"You don't deserve it, for you look as though you were keeping something secret. You have the expression of the cat who has swallowed the canary."

"It wasn't canary; it was quail. But I have really a confession to make."

"Now, at last, that sounds interesting. Go on."

"Our hostess didn't want to," he began with nervous incoherence. "You see, she said engaged people never pay any attention to the other guests, and she likes general conversation. And we did, didn't we?"

"We answered Mr. Van Pelt," she agreed. "So it might have been worse."

"I think we've been lovely," he cried hurriedly. "Well, you see I—I asked her to send us in together. You don't mind, do you?"

The girl laughed as she rose with the others.

"Did you?" she asked softly. "So did I."



THE MYSTERIES

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

THREE mysteries there will always be:
The changeless soul of the changing sea,
The riddle of God in flower and thorn
And the mind of a child that is newly born.

And the greatest of these is the smallest still,
For the sea can be plumbed to its depths at will;
And God can be found in the loneliest wild—
But who shall fathom the mind of a child?

A SONG OF GOTHAM

By NANCY BYRD TURNER

HOW snow comes down on Gotham Town!
A world away I watch it.
A light flake falls from cold sky walls,
A light wind stirs to catch it;
A million saunter in its wake,
The blue-gray distance lightens,
And down dim aisles for miles on miles
The dreary pavement whitens;
And up and down the chilly street
Go, muffled, wheel and hoof and feet.

How rain comes down on Gotham Town!
I see it in my vision:
The long wet way of streaming gray,
The northeast wind's derision;
Reluctant car and baffled cab,
Umbrella armies marching;
The tearful grief beyond relief
Of dun skies overarching;
Yet the gay smiles beneath the rain
Of Gotham Town, I see them plain.

How sunshine beats on Gotham streets!
I shut my eyes and know it:
An afternoon of early June,
The golden town below it;
The soft new airs in pleasant squares,
The Park's sweet carpet thickened,
The tide of living full and warm,
The love of living quickened;
And hearts all out for holiday,
Sun-gilded in their brave array.

How starlight falls on Gotham walls!
I mark it in my dreaming:
Clear, steadfast eyes turned through the skies
Across the black dark's scheming
To keep their guard with watch and ward
Upon the city's nights,
While league on league, in chain and arc,
Flame back the city's lights.
Ah, Heaven's moods come gently down
In my fond sight on Gotham Town!

A STRING OF PEARLS

By ALGERNON BOYESEN

IT was on the train running from Deauville to Paris that I heard the story. Wearied of my own thoughts, wearied of the prospect from the car window, the familiar Normandy landscapes, the flat fields laced with winding streams, the rows of slim trees rising high in the misty air, the occasional town, its red roofs huddled under a Gothic spire, I had entered into conversation with my traveling companion, an English surgeon, a big, healthy, pink man.

We had lazily been discussing various subjects of little interest to either of us, when the conversation turned on the races at Deauville, and I remarked on the proverbial failure of the best tips to materialize. He nodded his handsome head slowly, citing as the exception that proves the rule a fortunate experience of his own, and added: "There is rather an odd story connected with the circumstance." For a moment he gazed in silence at his large, well formed hands, turning them this way and that with an air of nice probation, and then he told me the story of Gaby de Lancay's famous string of pearls. I note it down now, not only for the sake of its fine dramatic elements, the fierce and tragic clash of instinct and avarice, but because, in its essential ignobleness, its lack of dignity, its qualities as of a sort of ghastly farce, it seems a typically modern anecdote.

Here it is as he told it to me.

It happened a year ago last June. I was strolling down the Rue de la Paix about noon, when my progress was arrested by a crowd in front of the jew-

eler Carlier's shop. The fascinating spectacle proved to be a string of pearls suspended from two little plush-covered posts and spanning the entire expanse of the broad windows, a collection of marvelously large and lustrous gems, each jewel flawless, round, its creamy velvet surface flushed with a golden glow. A group of little, pimply shop girls pressed against the window, whispering and giggling, while a throng of richly gowned women of various nationalities peered over their heads, speculating aloud on the price of the necklace or gazing at it silently, their lips compressed, their cheeks pinched as with the craving of an unappeased appetite.

I was in the act of circling this little ring of adoring women when I heard my name loudly called. I turned and saw—Halbeck, Karl Halbeck, the great South African millionaire. (After all I see no reason why I should withhold his name. He is dead now—was killed, you remember, in an automobile accident at Nice last year, and, moreover, one can hardly hold the man responsible for acting in the adventure that followed according to the special instincts of his race.)

He was leaning from an automobile hailing me vigorously with his stick. He took my outstretched hand, held it in his, prolonging the pressure while he asked me if I could spare him half an hour. I got into the car; he muttered an address to the chauffeur, and then leaned back beside me with a sigh as of relief. It was some time before he spoke. As we swung around the Colonne Vendôme he sat silent, his small, gray eyes following the fluttering

pigeons, his uneven yellow teeth making a furrow in the thick underlip. He seemed to have aged considerably in the few months since I had last dined in his big London house. The squat, muscular figure, though still conveying an impression of power, conveyed it, shall I say, less blatantly; the lines in the square, vulgar face, always marked, looked deep as scars in the glare of the noonday sun, and I noticed that one side of the bristling mustache, which he wore cut off at the lip abruptly as one docks a horse's tail, had turned in the interval almost white, though the thick, crinkly hair still showed black beneath the rim of his silk hat. To relieve him of his apparent perplexity I complimented him on the recent successes of the English string of horses he was then racing in France. If he heard the remark he chose to ignore it; it was not until we were humming up the Champs Élysées that he explained the service he required of me.

"Dane," he said haltingly, still looking out of the window, "Dane, I'm taking you to see a sick woman. These damned French doctors tell me that she—she can't live." He paused a moment, swallowing twice with a little clucking sound. "I have no confidence in them; I want your opinion. I want you to do what you can to save her."

He paused again, breathing loudly through his nose like a man who has been running, and I had opened my mouth to reply, when he turned toward me and gripped my arm.

"I know it's not the sort of case you would choose. I ask it of you as a favor—a favor I sha'n't forget." And then, as though to ward off, until we reached our destination, a possible refusal, he gave me, as it were, a belated response to my remark about his horses, expatiating, with a volubility unnatural to him, I thought, on the chances of his mare *Melody II* in the coming *Grand Prix*.

Our destination proved to be an apartment house in the Rue de la Renaissance, one of those tall, glaring, florid buildings with which the life in-

surance companies are disfiguring the old streets of Paris. Halbeck jumped out hurriedly. I followed him through a wrought iron gate and came upon him standing in a large white vestibule, before a double door, approached by two or three red-carpeted steps. After the lapse of some minutes the door was partially opened, and the blunt, red face of a serving woman, evidently a peasant, appeared in the dark aperture. On recognizing my companion, she hastily let down a brass chain which secured the door from the inside and admitted us, bowing obsequiously, begging a thousand pardons for having kept the gentlemen waiting. After switching on the electric light she backed breathlessly out of the room to apprise "madame" of "M'sieu Karl's" arrival, and scuttled off down a dark hallway.

We found ourselves in a large room all pink and gold and white. The heavy iron shutters were closed over the high windows, shutting out the light of day. A crystal luster blazed in the center of the high ceiling, disclosing a small grand piano, its gilded surface painted with garlanded cupids; half a dozen gilt cane chairs, forming on the gray carpet an empty circle, looking pathetically vacant, as though silently awaiting a company which never came; two or three copies of eighteenth century paintings, Fragonard and his school, and a table, likewise gilded, supporting a shallow basket from which bloomed a veritable mountain of orchids and ferns interwoven with great bows of mauve satin. We passed on into a second apartment as desolate as the first, identical, as I remember, except that a long, low settee occupied the place of the piano, and a small *escrioire*, littered with visiting cards, *cartes pneumatiques* and theater programs, in the midst of which lay a white silk candy box half filled with nibbled chocolates, replaced the table.

Through the closed door of a room beyond the rumor of a vivacious monologue reached our ears. While we waited Halbeck fidgeted about the room, now seated, beating a tattoo on

the arm of his chair or examining the gold head of his stick with curiosity, as though remarking it for the first time, now pacing the floor, smoothing his silk hat on the sleeve of his morning coat.

Presently the inner door opened and a shabby, meager young man, his livid face fringed with a sparse black beard, through which the skin of his sunken cheeks glistened like wax, appeared and bowed himself across the room, his hat in his hand, reiterating: "*Bonjour, messieurs; bonjour, messieurs.*" A moment later a woman stood framed in the doorway—a slim young woman with very black hair, a very white face and very red lips, wrapped in a dressing gown made of plaited yellow ribbons and lace and fur and artificial roses. She came to Halbeck quickly with the air of an accomplished actress making an entrance on the stage, put her hand in his with elegant condescension and asked, smiling perfectly, the lips just parting over the small, even teeth: "*Comment allez-vous, mon cher?*" and in the same breath went on rapidly to make her excuses for keeping him waiting, blaming the incompetence of the *coiffeur*. Then she glanced from Halbeck's face to the mirror behind him, and patted with thin fingers loaded with large diamonds the bands of glossy black hair that lay soft and close against either side of the small, round head like a blackbird's wings against its body.

He seized the opportunity to present me to her. While he stumbled through the introduction in his thick and ugly French, she appraised me in a swift, suspicious glance—a comprehensive survey commencing with my boots and stopping at my scarf pin. I returned the look in unaffected admiration.

Her features were wonderfully fine—wonderfully, when one recalls the fact that she began life in a laundry in Brussels. Her nose was singularly delicate, the eyes long and narrow, slanting slightly upward at the outer corners, the oval of the face pure and perfect; her skin milk white and strangely lum-

inous, so that one seemed to see the very spark of life glowing through it, the vital element itself burning within the little body like a flame within an opalescent vase. She greeted me as elegantly as any viscountess of melodrama, and then, recalling an incident of the preceding night—how a young Englishman, a "*beau garçon*," had jumped onto the *piste* at the *Jardin de Paris* and travestied the dancing of the women, his hat on the back of his head, making the tails of his coat serve him as a skirt—she threw back her head laughing quite naturally, a wave of merriment that rippled over her shoulders, exhausted itself in a shiver of the bare, blue-veined instep nestling in the white down of a bedroom slipper, and washed away, as it were, in its passage, all her theatrical decorum, leaving her chattering spontaneously, entertainingly of the events of the past evening.

Suddenly her face darkened. She told of an American, a *sale scélérat*, who had taken advantage of her companion's momentary absence rudely to accost her, and as I watched the varied play of her features, the swift and passionate gestures with which she rehearsed the little adventure, her whole body seemed to quiver and recoil under the lash of the remembered insult. The shoulders, the arms, the hands kindled into an intense and vibrant life of their own like points of flame—all other women I had ever seen seemed to me by contrast mere clods of clay, mass and matter, without motion or spirit. Hardly had she finished the recital—indeed, it seemed to me that I was still admiring the final pantomime: an uplift of the shoulders, a widening of the eyes, a gesture as of repelling with outstretched palms a loathsome mass—when its motive was forgotten, and she was standing before Halbeck, stooping toward him, laying a small hand on his broad, hairy fist, demanding playfully:

"What came over you last night, my friend?"

In reply he mumbled something which sounded like a bashful remonstrance. She moved to the back of his

chair, laughing inaudibly as at a genial reminiscence, leaned on his rounded shoulders, slipped gently an arm about his neck, and, gazing down at him with a tenderness oddly maternal in her eyes, appealed to me:

"What do you think this big boy did last night when we returned home?"

Halbeck rose suddenly, all but upsetting the chair in his confusion, and blurted out my errand. She shot a hostile glance at me, as one might look at a conspirator unmasked, hesitated a breath, and then, with a shrug, consented to the examination, exclaiming:

"What a bore! This doctor gives me a month, that one two. Yet here I am—I live!"

She passed languidly into the bedroom, murmuring: "What a farce! What a farce!" I followed her, closing the door behind me.

Well, she was a victim of pulmonary tuberculosis, what you laymen know as galloping consumption. Her phthisis was far advanced; it was evident to me that only with the greatest care could her life be prolonged another six months, and I was insisting on the importance of a strict regimen while she sat gazing petulantly at the carpet, as a schoolgirl receives a scolding, when she sighed and interrupted me with the irrelevant remark:

"It's sad, but I shall have to leave this poor Englishman."

She shook her head slowly, sadly. "He has been so kind"—"*tellement gentil*" was the phrase she used. She went on to explain that she was going to leave Halbeck. The desertion, she knew, would hurt him, for he was mad about her, but her action was, it appeared, inevitable, its logic irrefutable. She stated the reason simply, with an air of finality: "He is not rich enough."

In my surprise I exclaimed unguardedly: "Not rich enough? Halbeck is one of the richest men in England."

She turned quickly toward me, her whole person tense with sudden excitement, her eyes sparkling, her nostrils dilated, repeating the question: "He is rich, is he? He is rich?"

I nodded. The red-faced woman,

who had admitted us, was fumbling with a black satin ribbon which supported her mistress's chemise at the shoulder. She turned on the woman, censuring her clumsiness with an abrupt and cruel harshness. Standing before a dressing table, she tied the bow with deft fingers and patted it into shape, soliloquizing into the mirror the while. Her voice sounded hard and metallic.

"That puts another face on the matter. He is rich—a miser! I need not bother myself further about him! He could very well have bought me the pearls." She placed her finger tips against her temples and raised her eyes in shuddering protest to the ceiling. "A miser! Ugh! How I hate misers!"

"Pearls," I repeated wonderingly, "what pearls?"

She was pacing the room, clad in a chemise on which cupids, traced in lace, disported themselves amid ribbons and gauzy linen, scornfully arraigning Halbeck, reviewing their intimacy with embarrassing frankness from its inception, emphasizing with little apostrophes addressed to the ceiling the rectitude of her own conduct and the sordid obliquity of his, when I put the question; and she answered it only parenthetically, without perceptibly checking the flow of the tirade:

"The string of pearls at Carlier's, of course—the string everyone is talking about."

"My dear child," I remonstrated, "I heard a woman say, only this morning, that Carlier had refused an American millionaire's offer of a million francs for the string."

She stopped in front of me, her clenched fists on her hips.

"That is not my affair, is it? I want the pearls. I have an Argentine who is only waiting my word to buy them for me. As for this Halbeck"—here she snapped her fingers under my nose—"I have finished with him and his diamonds."

She held her hands outstretched over the dressing table, slipping the rings from her thin fingers nauseously, as one shakes vermin from one's flesh, ex-

claiming: "*Les diamants, comme ils sont vulgaires!*"

The big stones clattered on the glass top of the dressing table and rattled among the gold toilet articles, the array of scent bottles and little paste and powder boxes. Then she dropped onto the cushioned bench which stood before the table, her breast still rising and falling with the violence of the explosion, and addressed the servant tartly:

"Let Monsieur Karl enter."

I hate scenes. As Halbeck entered, I slipped past him into the room beyond; the servant closed the door noiselessly behind me.

For a brief interval the sound of her voice, a patter of sharp, metallic notes, punctuated by Halbeck's replies, low, hoarse, indistinct, anguished like the broken responses wrenched from the victim of some mortal accident, came to me through the door; then it opened, pushed outward by a bare arm. Halbeck reappeared, and the door, drawn to by a small, clenched hand, closed with a jar at his back. He went straight past me, walking unsteadily as a man walks on a ship's heaving deck, to his silk hat, which rested on the gilt table in the outer room.

For a long minute he remained standing beneath the blazing luster, gazing blankly about him, mechanically smoothing the hat on his sleeve. He seemed instantaneously to have grown sick and old and willless; his head shook between his shoulders; his eyelids looked red and raw, as though scalded with unshed tears. Twice he started toward the street door, which the servant held wide open before him; twice he turned back to the closed white door behind him, hesitating, his lips moving soundlessly, as though in voiceless controversy. I put my arm through his and led him out into the street. With one foot on the step of the automobile he stopped, muttering something about having forgotten his gloves, but I bundled him into the tonneau, as one hustles a drunkard into a cab, and told the chauffeur to go on down the Champs Elysées.

Seated beside him in the car, I gave him perfunctorily my diagnosis of the case, droned it into a deaf ear, summing up with the statement:

"She will not live six months."

He received the information apathetically, merely echoing the words, "six months," unmeaningly, as one sounds an unfamiliar phrase in a foreign tongue; and I had just settled back, with the sense of a disagreeable duty done, to enjoy the spectacle of the long, sunlit avenue stretching away between the rows of flowering chestnut trees, when I felt my arm gripped tightly and heard Halbeck's voice demanding excitedly: "Are you certain of what you say? Are you certain she cannot live six months?"

I turned in surprise, to find him leaning toward me breathlessly awaiting my answer, his eyes fixed on my lips with the look of a man tortured by a fearful suspense.

I reiterated regretfully the assertion that she could not live six months.

Imagine my astonishment, my disgust, when I saw the man's face relax, brighten—yes, unmistakably brighten—and heard a long, deep sigh of relief whistle through his dry lips as he threw himself back on the cushioned seat!

In the act of signaling the chauffeur to drop me at the Rond Point, I glanced at him again to assure myself that I had not misinterpreted his manner. There was no room for doubt; he was sitting back comfortably, complacently twisting an end of his mustache into his mouth, chewing it with an unpleasant crepitation, his eyes half closed with the air of one solving a problem.

Presently he said, nodding his head slowly, eyeing me interrogatively: "Six months? Six months, eh?" and again, as I got out of the car: "You can give me your professional word on it—six months at the outside?" laying a peculiar stress on the number, as though it held for him some secret significance.

I replied curtly enough in the affirmative and left him, at once shocked and mystified by his behavior, finally to interpret the brutal relief with which he had heard the woman's death sen-

tence pronounced as a cruel joy in the knowledge that his rival's triumph would be short-lived; and I threaded my way among the chattering nurse maids, the mendicant flower girls, the pale, bare-legged children rolling their hoops beneath the trees, reflecting on the essential egotism of the sentiment we misname love, its ruthless violence when balked, its relentless cruelty when baffled, until the cooing doves of romantic tradition seemed for it a less appropriate symbol than the net and trident of the ancient arena.

I had asked some people to dine with me that night at the *Café de Paris*. They were late in arriving, and, having ordered dinner, I was sitting back on the cushioned bench inhaling a cigarette, lazily scanning the long row of heads and shoulders visible above the white line of the tables opposite me—deflowered faces all of them; faces sick, sated, corrupt, whether showing above the white linen and black coats of the men or the bare powdered flesh and gaudy dresses of the women—when my glance was arrested by the rounded back of the *maître d'hôtel*. He was bending over a table, occupied by a fat, swarthy young man, disengaging with elaborate caution a steaming truffle from its envelope of pork, accompanying the ceremony with an appetizing eulogy of the dish. The feat accomplished, he stepped back smiling, bowing, heels together, like a prestidigitator inviting the plaudits of his audience, but the young man sat silent, his elbows on the tablecloth, his chubby face propped between his knuckles, glaring feverishly down the room, while the truffle gave forth its pungent perfume unnoticed under his very nose. From time to time he raised a glass to his mouth without looking at it, and gulped down a mouthful of champagne. I followed the direction of his fascinated gaze and discovered in the further corner of the room, seated against the wall, her dark head and pale face clearly outlined against the green upholstery behind her, the heroine of my morning's adventure, and beside her no swarthy-

skinned Argentine—but Halbeck himself!

Wound about her throat, spreading in widening circles over the bare white neck, was a string of pearls, a string of marvelously large and lustrous pearls, each jewel flawless, round, its creamy velvet surface flushed with a golden glow.

As I looked, she picked, with a graceful mimicry of greed, a fat, purplish peach from its bed of cotton, a peach so artificially perfect that I was actually surprised to see the yellow juice spout from it under the pressure of her small teeth. She pressed it to her mouth a moment, her head thrown back, her eyes half closed as in ecstasy, and then, with the pretty air of a child offering to share a sweetmeat, held it out to her companion. He declined it. She insisted coaxingly. He waved it away imperatively. Laughing, she slipped her hand under his raised arm and pressed the luscious fruit against his lips; the juice ran down the cleft in his chin and splashed on the starched bosom of his shirt. He pushed her away rudely, and when, still laughing, she leaned toward him to repair the damage, a tiny powder puff poised in one hand, a gold and jeweled box in the other, he met her play with an angry glance, a muttered malediction, and drawing away from her, sat sullenly mopping his shirt with a large handkerchief. With a slight lift of the eyebrows, an all but imperceptible shrug, she tossed the bruised fruit into the champagne cooler, and resting her chin in the palm of her hand, tranquilly surveyed the room. When her glance fell on me the life revived in her face; she beckoned me with a little jerk of the head.

She greeted me graciously, let her cold, slim fingers rest in my hand while she thanked me gently for my counsel of the morning, promising, with a winsome air of submission, to try to profit by it, and begged me to sit down, saying that she could not let me leave Paris with the impression that she was *méchante*—the impression which, I suppose, she inferred the little scene in

her bedroom had made on me. Quite on the contrary, she insisted, she was *très bonne fille* when kindly treated. There was much more in the same strain, until, becoming aware of Halbeck's growing confusion, she broke off abruptly and called on me to admire her pearls; and as she dallied with them, letting the tips of her fingers play over them caressingly, I saw glowing in the depths of her eyes, with the blue gleam of burning alcohol, a spark of triumph.

Halbeck had been sitting staring moodily at the tablecloth, beating a tattoo on his plate. When she mentioned the pearls, the blood suddenly suffused his thick neck and mounted to his cheek. I made my excuses and passed on into the *vestiaire*. He rose and followed me. We exchanged a commonplace remark or two. I had turned toward the door, when he asked me, with a clumsy affectation of joviality—I say “affectation,” for the anxiety in his eye plainly belied the cheery ring of his voice:

“Well, how do you find your fair patient this evening?”

“Beautiful,” was my answer. “Far too beautiful ever to die.” And I added, half in jest: “We must contrive somehow to keep her alive forever, to brighten up this gray old world of ours.”

Start? Perhaps that is too strong a term, but I'll swear he winced at the words. He made a pretense of rearranging the pin which held the orchid in his buttonhole, his face turned from me, his chin sunk in his collar; the mirror exposed to me his puckered brow, his tightly compressed lips. I had moved again toward the door when he intercepted me.

“You don't think, by any chance, you could have been mistaken in your diagnosis—that she actually will live on indefinitely?” And while he awaited my answer he was quite still, as though holding his breath.

I replied brusquely, “No,” and pushed past him, conscious, not only of irritation at his lack of tact—his question was quite out of tune with

the tone of my remark—but of a disturbing sense of having been in contact with some obscure, some obscene passion, as one might feel when one has put one's hand on something loathsome in the dark. Did the man, possessing the woman, freed from the menace of a rival, still desire her death? Was his sense of humiliation at his forced purchase of the pearls so poignant, the wound in his covetous soul so deep, that only the certainty of her approaching agony could soothe it? Was it possible, I asked myself, for a man, enslaved, in spite of himself, by a woman's beauty, to cherish for her in his secret soul a mortal hatred; to lust for her body while yearning for her death as a deliverance from his bondage, a remastering of himself, the final defeat of the enemy?

I asked myself these questions as I stepped down the long room to welcome my guests; it was not until six months later that they were answered. The following day I left Paris.

I got back to Paris from the Italian lakes on a cold, wet night in the late autumn. The next day dawned gray, damp and chilly. I was scanning a morning paper over the remains of one of Henri's inimitable *omelettes aux champignons*, wondering how to put in the afternoon, when I stumbled on the welcome news that it was the day of the Grand Prix d'Automne. I hurried through luncheon, jumped into a cab and joined the procession of mud-be-spattered conveyances, vehicles of every description—shabby, shaky taxi-autos, big polished private cars, smart broughams with liveried servants and fat, sleek cobs, dilapidated *fiacres* drawn by goatlike nags, swaying omnibuses loaded to the roofs, pulled by six horses, pony carts and bicycles—a procession which wound its way through the Bois d'Auteuil between two black streams of pedestrians, obese, panting old women, sallow-faced boys with cigarettes in their mouths, wizened little working girls, giggling, arm in arm, fat shopkeepers reading some racing journal as they walked, vehicles and pedestrians alike

all urged on by the hope of seeing a chosen horse win the big race, all splashing on through the mud amid a babel of whirring wheels, tooting horns, cracking whips, threatening and jeering voices, toward the same big question mark.

The first race had been run when I got to the course. I had decided to back in the second race a likely-looking débutant, and was elbowing my way to the betting booths, when I encountered an American woman whom I knew. By the time I had marked my favorites on her program, fetched her a glass of champagne and water and found her a chair, the starting bell had clanged, the grill had closed, and I reached the rail just in time to see my outsider come home winner by a clean head. The third race had brought me no better luck—the horse I backed, leading by a good ten lengths, bolted at the last hurdle—and I was wandering about in search of Halbeck, hoping to get a word with him about the chances of his mare Melody II in the next race, the big event of the day, when I discovered his wife and daughter in the stand just above me. I struggled through the throng and mounted the steps.

Mrs. Halbeck, a large, raw-boned woman, her weather-beaten face and yellow bang appearing as usual beneath the nodding plumes of a Gainsborough hat, as though in single defiance of the vagaries of Parisian fashion, placed a stiffly gloved hand in mine, and, after remarking on the wretchedness of the weather, proceeded to present me to her daughter, a stubby girl with a red nose, who looked ridiculously like her father masquerading as a young lady. Her mother was asking me my opinion of the baths at Nauheim, when the girl exclaimed excitedly: "Do look, mamma!"

In the mass of people before us a circular space had opened. In its center stood a young woman with very black hair, a very white face and very red lips, her small head, wound about with a kind of turban, held proudly erect, one white-gloved hand on her

hip, the other holding against her slim flank an enormous sable muff, the tip of a long French shoe showing beneath the fur which edged her skirt, posing, unabashed by the throng that pressed about her, apparently oblivious to its sniggering comment, posing for a photographer who faced her, bent over a big camera. She wore a sort of tunic of claret-colored velvet, falling to her knees, with broad sable cuffs and a high sable collar; a string of marvelously large and lustrous pearls overflowed, as it were, the dark band of fur at her throat and tumbled like a cascade over the ruddy fabric of the dress.

As the camera clicked, a fit of coughing seized her; she bent over a chair, leaning on it for support, her narrow shoulders painfully convulsed, stifling the sound with a diminutive handkerchief. When she took it from her lips it bore a dark purple stain. She glanced at it, rolled it into a tiny ball and, with a shrug, dropped it in the mud; then she turned, and carrying her chin disdainfully high, as a chin should be carried above such a profusion of pearls, moved slowly down the aisle. The crowd instinctively opened for her passage.

Mrs. Halbeck, viewing the scene through a tortoise shell lorgnette, sniffed—one might almost say snorted—in the manner of one personally affronted, and protested: "What a brazen little creature!" Her daughter drew in her breath with a gasp and whispered: "How I should love to look just like that!" Halbeck, who joined us just then, said nothing.

We left the mother to reprove the daughter's scandalous confession, and elbowed our way through the crowd to the grove behind the stands, where blanketed horses moved among the green tree boles. Halbeck seemed in exceptionally good spirits; while we awaited the appearance of Melody II, his candidate in the big race, he puffed comfortably at a thick cigar, his hands thrust deep in the pockets of a fur coat, his legs apart, his back to a glowing brazier. Whether prompted by a sense of duty or by that vague feeling

of irritation which assails the best of us in the presence of too flagrant a serenity, I spoke of his mistress, remonstrating with him for letting her expose herself to such inclement weather.

He flushed up, seemed about to respond curtly, hesitated a moment and then replied civilly enough:

"She would come to exhibit the pearls."

"But," I protested, "this weather is fatal to a woman in her condition—fatal. You should send her South at once—tomorrow."

This time there was no room for doubt. As I uttered the suggestion, I plainly saw him start, plainly saw the secret fear I had glimpsed in the *vestimentaire* at the Café de Paris grow in his eye, heard it quaver in his voice like the crack in a bell, despite his effort to maintain a level, conversational tone.

"You know these women," he said. "They won't leave Paris until after Christmas. They don't think it the smart thing to do. It would be a waste of breath to suggest it to her."

"Not if one put it strongly enough; not if one made it clear to her that she will be dead in a week if she stays here."

"A week." He repeated the word to himself and stood silent a moment, his head cocked on one side, his eye fixed on the toe of his boot, his under lip stuck out with the air of one making a calculation.

"You must make that effort to prolong her life, if only for the sake of your own conscience," I insisted, adding: "If not for the sake of your own conscience, do it for the sake of mine. I should feel as though I had tacitly connived at a murder—"

I broke off in surprise. The blood had suddenly darkened his cheek; he stood before me fidgeting with the cigar, his eyes furtively avoiding mine with the air of a guilty man taxed with his crime; but he was silent, stubbornly silent, and made no offer to warn the woman of her danger.

Angered at what appeared to me a wanton brutality, I said emphatically:

"If you don't care to make the effort, I certainly shall."

He raised his head with a jerk, his mouth open, and for a moment I thought that then and there he was going to blurt out some sinister confession. I was relieved when his lips slowly, soundlessly shut, and his glance shifted from my face to the red coals of the brazier.

At this moment I caught a glimpse of a ruby turban moving through a sea of black silk hats. Exclaiming, "By Jove, there she is!" I turned to follow it. Halbeck caught me by the arm and drew me to him confidentially.

"You've been awfully kind about all this," I heard him say. "I believe I am doing you a service in advising you to lay a bit on Melody."

I thanked him hurriedly and, craning my neck in an effort to keep the ruby turban in view turned again to go; but he retained his grip on my arm and, enumerating into my ear his reasons for his confidence in the victory, urged me gradually toward the spot where the mare pivoted about the stable boy who held her, champing the bit, pawing up the wet turf, while, near by, a short, red-faced man in a pot hat stooped over a small jockey, his hand on the boy's shoulder, speaking dogmatically. When finally I got away, the saddling bell had sounded. I reached the booth just in time to slip my money beneath the descending grill. I pocketed the tickets and rushed off in vain pursuit of my patient. As I pushed through the throng, the suspicion that Halbeck wished the woman dead hardened into a conviction; it became for me a certainty that, not only did he desire her death, but that he awaited it impatiently, even eagerly. But what could be his motive? Had his hatred, generated at the scene I had witnessed, fattened during the intervening months, a monstrous birth of their lawless union, until now its hunger for revenge could only be slaked by the sight of her death agony? But Halbeck was an ordinary man, at worst an avaricious man; it was preposterous to accuse him of har-

boring so abnormal, so hideous a passion. Yet I felt certain that he had detained me expressly to prevent my giving her the warning which he knew must prolong her life. What imaginable reason could he have for grudging the dying woman a month, a week of grace? The enigma was destined to be solved sooner than I expected.

On a damp, gray morning, five days later, I was accosted in the entrance of my hotel by Halbeck's chauffeur. He thrust breathlessly into my hand a scribbled line from his master, begging me to come at once to the Rue de la Renaissance; he had been hunting me through Paris for two hours. As I stepped into the car, it occurred to me that it was just six months before that I had accompanied Halbeck to the same destination.

A white-faced woman, her eyes swollen with crying, admitted me to the apartment. As on my first visit, the iron shutters were closed over the windows; the anteroom was dark; the *salon* in semi-darkness; from the doorway of the room beyond a rectangular patch of yellow light fell on the gray carpet, dimly outlining the objects in the room. On the threshold I encountered Halbeck. He took my hand, pressed it silently and motioned me, with a slight movement of his head, toward the room beyond. I peered into his face, not unprepared to discover it convulsed with fiendish glee, but a veil of shadow concealed the features. I felt a drop of warm water splash on my hand; the man was crying! I passed on into the bedchamber.

The woman was already in her death throes. Sitting high amid the tumbled lace and ribbon of the bed, every detail of her final agony thrown into relentless relief by an electric bulb which a chubby gilt cupid, flying downward from a canopy of pink silk, held suspended over her head, her knees drawn up against her heaving chest, her head thrown back, her sharp shoulders raised to the level of her ears, the eyes staring wide with terror from a white, mask-like face, she fought fearfully for

breath—writhed, sobbed, gasped for breath, her hands groping vainly in space, her thin arms beating the air in vain. At the foot of the bed the peasant woman sat on her heels, rocking herself to and fro, a monotonous murmur like the drone of a prayer sounding through a blue apron thrown over her bowed head. At the head of the bed a plump, blonde young woman, tightly swathed in a green cloth dress, leaned stiffly toward the dying woman in the act of smoothing back, with pink-nailed, jeweled fingers, the moist, thick masses of hair that clung to the pale, wet brow. The tears streamed from her heavily penciled eyelids, and, coursing down her cheeks, streaked the bluish white paint which coated her face. On the floor at her feet lay a large, white-plumed hat.

As I approached the bed the dying girl, gathering all her remaining strength in a last supreme effort to inspire, clawed wildly at her breast, as though the flimsy lace of her nightdress were a stifling weight; she clutched and clawed at the string of heavy pearls wound about her throat and tore it from her straining throat, as one tears a strangling noose. The string snapped beneath her trembling fingers, and as she fell back exhausted upon the crumpled pillows the pearls poured over her bosom, spilled like drops of quicksilver over the agonized body, ran among the disordered bedclothes and dropped onto the floor.

An hour later I entered the *salon* and told Halbeck that all was over. He was leaning against the mantel, his back toward me. I put my hand on his shoulder and gently urged him toward the street door. He resisted the pressure, stood still, loudly blowing his nose, then abruptly turned, pushed past me and entered the bedchamber. I went on into the anteroom, put on my coat and hat and stood waiting for him, my hand on the doorknob. Five minutes passed; still he did not reappear. Impatient, wondering what detained him in that room of death, I partially retraced my steps. I was shocked to hear, on reaching the *salon*,

a clamor of angry voices issuing from the open door beyond. Perplexed, stung by indefinite suspicions, I entered the room. On the threshold I stopped aghast. I shall never forget the scene that met my eyes.

I saw Halbeck seated on the edge of a *fauteuil* beside the bed, holding clumsily across his knees, as a man holds an infant in arms, the little body of the dead girl. The head and arms hung downward, the long black hair sweeping the carpet; oozing from the gray lips a thin stream of blood trickled down his trousers. At his feet, on all fours, her head and shoulders under the bed, was the peasant woman; leaning toward him across the vacant bed, the blonde woman rummaged violently among the tumbled bedclothes. Halbeck, too, leaned forward, one eye fixed on his hands, which protruded, palms upward, from beneath the dead body, the other intently following the movements of the blonde woman, while guttural sounds, interrupted by the shrill exclamations of the woman opposite him and the smothered sobs of the woman at his feet, issued at regular intervals from his throat. As I entered, he raised his face to the blonde woman and said loudly, as though insisting on a disputed point: "One is missing." With the words the explanation of the brutal spectacle dawned upon me: he was counting, as the women collected them, the scattered pearls.

With a toss of her head the blonde woman plunged her hands again among the bedclothes, made a pretense of exploring anew the still warm hollow in the mattress, then straightened up, holding between two fingers the missing pearl. With a grunt of triumph Halbeck rose to his feet stretching out his hand for the jewel. The body slipped from his knees and fell, naked and disheveled, to the floor. With an angry ejaculation the woman relinquished the pearl, the gleam of baffled cupidity glittering in her painted eyes.

We were halfway down the Champs Elysées when the chauffeur asked Halbeck where he was to go. Halbeck answered, "To Carlier's," and added in a matter-of-fact tone to me: "I rented the pearls for six months; the lease expires today. *I agreed to forfeit the security if the pearls were not returned in six months.*"

Through the train window I saw rows of gray apartment houses with blue sloping roofs and clustered chimney pots. We were already in Paris. My traveling companion rose and busied himself with his luggage. Suddenly he exclaimed: "By Jove, I all but forgot the point of my story! Melody II won the race. I made a very good thing out of it." And I, too, in retelling it, all but forgot the point of the story.



SHE MADE A NAME FOR HIM

MRS. BENHAM—Many a man owes his success in life to his wife.
 BENHAM—Yes, Adam would never have been heard from if Eve hadn't given him the apple.

DERELICTS

By S. A. WHITE

GRIM spirit ships that haunt the Seven Seas,
Dark midnight derelicts of drifting death,
A graveyard fleet they go before the breeze,
Guided alone by Neptune's swelling breath.

No port, no haven waits each ghastly wraith,
And masterless they tack their eerie way,
As sinister as if some broken faith
Had damned them thus to drift by night and day.

With splintered stumps and rusted stanchions bent,
With davits smashed and moss green decks submerged,
They come again the zig-zag way they went,
Finding old ocean paths have now converged.

O sailor bold on some proud, pulsing bark,
Keep keen your watch upon the charted course,
Lest hapless hulks, careering in the dark,
So sudden strike athwart with deadly force.

These pirates dumb on world wide commerce prey,
Sinking the trawler, tramp or liner stout;
Many a good ship goes that fateful way;
Many a watcher weeps since it went out.

Over the foam untrammeled and sublime,
Bold buccaneers, they voyage to destroy,
Drawing the curses of each bord'ring clime,
Bartering sorrow for a nation's joy.

So, on the courses of Life's great high seas,
As havenless some human beings toss;
Naught of the nectar have they but the lees,
Naught of the harvest but the bitter loss.

Drifting they go on every compassed line,
A hidden downfall for the unaware;
Silent and perilous, without a sign,
They cross known paths the homeward feet would fare.

Over Life's foam untrammeled and sublime,
They sink, true souls and minds so strong and stout;
Many a brave heart meets that fateful time;
Many a mother weeps since he went out.

ONE OF THE ELECT

By ETTA ANTHONY BAKER

SCENE: *A fashionable avenue in a fashionable metropolis just after Sunday morning service.*

"There! That's over at last! I thought he was never going to get through. Awfully long-winded, isn't he? But, then, I suppose he feels he must do *something* to earn the ten thousand the church pays him. Too much salary, in my opinion. A minister has so little to do—just visit about all week and talk on Sunday. And those prayers of his make one positively uncomfortable. I don't see why he has to pray for everybody in the world. It would be much simpler just to mention our own church, or even the city, for that matter, and let the rest of the places do their own praying. The heathen? Let the missionaries pray for them—that's what we pay them for.

"I went to Sorolla's private view yesterday—you know that Spanish artist they all rave over. Magnificent! Never saw such gowns in my life. I took notes of two or three. The pictures? H'm—didn't think much of them.

"Awful crush at the Opera, Friday—'Les Huguenots.' We sat in the Van Alsten box. I enjoyed every minute; Tommy Atherton was telling me all about the Amherst divorce. Poor Mr. Amherst! Oh, yes, I suppose he *is* to blame, but he's so handsome and entertaining. Probably she drove him to it.

"There comes Mrs. Atwater. Tiresome thing! Caught me in a corner at the Vreedenburg tea and asked help for her everlasting old Chinese sufferers. I told her frankly that I felt justified in withholding a subscription because

my sympathies are for home missions every time. Just think of the crying need all about us—the Kentucky mountaineers and the Indians and—child labor—and all those things!

"And where can you find greater need than right here in our own city? Why, if I didn't feel that my Persian lamb ought to be remodeled for next winter, I'd contribute toward that nursery mission work the church has taken up lately. It's a glorious work. I told Mrs. Stanhope so—she's at the head of it, you know. Doesn't she entertain perfectly? I know she appreciates my interest. It must encourage the workers to feel that we are with them heart and soul in their struggle.

"By the way, I had a splendid idea during the sermon. It— Oh, hurry! I want Mrs. Windom to see my new hat. Madame Cecile says it makes me look ten years younger. I only hope no one will copy it—such a despicable thing to do; don't you think so? What is that on the left side of hers? Oh, I see! The wings start from *choux* of cerise velvet. Wait till I make a note of it. I feel sure Madame Cecile can get the general effect.

"I started to tell you about my idea. I always find church so helpful—one can think without interruption. Why, the morning the dear Bishop preached that splendid sermon, I planned all the decorations for our new library. Well, you know that Wallace woman who sits near me? She dresses well, but very simply, and she's just the size of my Marie. Here she comes now. Excuse me a moment.

"Dear Miss Wallace, may I speak to

you on a little matter of business? No time like the present. I feel sure the Lord sanctions good deeds even upon the Sabbath, and we charity workers are so rushed. I know a young girl just about your age, possibly a little older—twenty-two, say—who would be delighted to have any clothes you feel you can spare. She's a most worthy object, I assure you. I always fortify myself for a request of this sort by thinking of the help I am giving. Thank you! You are more than generous. Just send the trunk to my house, and I will see that it reaches its destination safely. Good-bye, dear.

"There! I knew that little remark about her age would fetch her. She'll never see twenty-five again. How I despise this mania some women have for looking younger than they are! But the dresses will be fine for Marie. Best maid I ever had. Cheap, too, but she'll be demanding a raise soon, so I simply must pacify her.

"Church certainly does conduce to love of one's fellow creatures. I often tell my husband so, but he's queer—just smiles in that tantalizing little way he has and stretches out on the library couch with his pipe and his paper. And he does such queer things sometimes. One Sunday I found him coddling the ugliest little animal—a bedraggled yellow puppy—no breed whatever. The creature had been abused, and he had chased two blocks in his slippers to rescue it. Was washing it with my best Castile soap, too. When I remonstrated, he just said: 'I thought this was the purest stuff made, but if you've anything better, why trot it out.'

"And once he was feeding a disreputable-looking tramp—and giving him *Port!* Said the man was down on his luck. He's so easily influenced. He didn't rest until he found a home for the dog and work for the man. Now I contend that, if he'd been in church, where he ought to have been, such things would never occur to him; but you can't convince *him*.

"Isn't it pitiful to think of the millions who have none of our oppor-

tunities; who live without splendid churches and eloquent sermons and beautiful music? It uplifts me so—the music, I mean. I long to make people better and happier, to lift them out of their lowly rut. But isn't our soprano tiresome? My husband thinks she sings like an angel and looks the part to perfection, but I don't admire that style.

"Did you hear that young Hoover wants to marry her? I suppose she thinks she'll walk right into the best set here, but I, for one, shall have nothing to do with her. Angel! I so dislike pushing people. It's our duty to keep that class down. They're pretty wise, after all, over there in China, or India, or wherever it is. I firmly believe in caste.

"There's Mrs. Van Vorse just ahead. Some people think she's so witty, but she says the queerest things to me—almost cutting, but, of course, she doesn't intend it so. I dislike to hear a woman chatter all the time—one doesn't get a word in edgewise. She seems to be hurrying, but I think we can overtake her. My card for her reception next week must have been lost in the mail. She ought to know about it.

"Did you ever hear that she was dreadfully poor once? Taught, or did something like that; and think where she stands now! Such energy! Such resourcefulness! Her marriage to Van did most, of course, but I honor her for what she has accomplished.—Oh, Mrs. Van! Mrs. Van Vorse!—She certainly is in a hurry. Well, never mind! I'll catch her at the Board meeting next Wednesday—I've decided to help the good cause. Her reception's on Friday.

"There's Bessie Ransome. Some people consider her a beauty—but I don't. I haven't forgotten that she came home from Washington in the same car with Reggie Armstrong. They even went into the diner together! I told the shameful story to a group of ladies at Mrs. Sampson's musicale—Bisham was singing quite softly, so he didn't disturb us much—and they

all promised not to breathe a word about it. No use spreading things of that sort. Did she bow then? Short-sighted, probably, and won't wear glasses for fear of spoiling her beauty. They're a sure sign of age, too. Oh, no! I use a lorgnette—that's very different.

"Isn't that Mrs. Chauncey at her window? Not been to church at all, evidently. She ought to think of the example she sets to others, even if her baby is ill. What is it Paul says about not eating meat? That's the way I feel about it. Besides, I always come home full of lofty desires and high ideals, which more than repay me for

getting out at such a heathenish hour and sitting through one of those tiresome sermons. But I suppose it takes all kinds of people to make a world.

"Well, good-bye. Do come in to lunch some day. Wait—wait a moment! What was the text? I've completely forgotten it. In fact, I don't believe I heard it distinctly. It was from one of those old prophets, Peter or Moses, or was it Noah? Oh, my wretched memory! Thanks. About bearing false witness against one's neighbor; in the Beatitudes, isn't it? And I love that other one, too, about bearing one another's burdens. That always appeals to me. Good-bye."



A WOMAN'S PARTING

By CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

I HAVE forgotten you! Wherefore my days
 Run gladly, as in those white hours gone by
 Before I learned to love you. Now have I
 Returned to that old freedom, where the rays
 Of your strange wonder no more shall amaze
 My spirit. How remote the rich hours lie
 Wherein our hearts were one! Eternity
 Is not so distant to my youthful gaze.

I have forgotten—yea, and more than this,
 I nevermore shall need you at my side;
 New love, new days, new friends shall swiftly glide
 Into my life, to bring my heart new bliss.
 (Hush! On my lips I feel a ghostlike kiss.)
 I have forgotten? . . . O, I lied, I lied!

AT THE OPERA

By GUERNSEY VAN RIPER

ACT 1

SH-H-H! There goes the curtain! Goodness gracious, but it's dark! I'd much prefer to have the lights stay on so we could—Hark! Just listen to the cellos there—are they not simply grand? Why, Ponci seems to have a cold! I hardly understand A word he sings—Oh, by the way, what *is* the bill tonight? Ah, surely, yes, it's "La Boheme"—I had forgotten quite. It's such a favorite of mine; in fact, I simply dote On everything of Mendelssohn's, yes, every single note! And best of all's the Jewel Song; just wait till you hear that. I hope that Ponci's in good voice and doesn't get it flat. Last year—Ah, bravo, splendid, Ponci! Was it not divine? Come—encore, Ponci! Bravo, bravo! Isn't Ponci fine?

ACT 2

Sh-h-h! There goes the curtain—see, there's Kremstad on the stage! She's getting thin and, really, dear, I think she shows her age. I'm told she's paid eight hundred for each evening she appears; Just think of that—Who *is* that man with Lord and Lady Meeres? It can't be Harry Courtleigh, for they cut him dead last night; I don't know why they did it, but I'm sure it served him right. Oh, why must all the lights be down just when we wish to see What's going on around us? I, for one, cannot agree That darkness helps to—What has happened? Oh, yes, that duet— Splendid, yes, indeed, why, listen, they're applauding yet! Glorious! Magnificent! Now, wasn't it divine? Ah, bravo, Kremstad! Encore, Kremstad! Isn't Kremstad fine?

ACT 3

Sh-h-h! There goes the curtain—now we *must* be very still; This act is full of death and tears—Mephisto comes to kill Fair Marguerite—Oh, doesn't he? Let's see—Why, yes, you're right; It's "La Boheme"—I quite forgot—I'm all upset tonight. These tragic things get on my nerves and hold me in a spell; I get so fully lost in them that I can hardly tell My name or who is with me. Have you ever heard Saloam? Well, any time she's on the stage you'll not find me at home. It's quite the best of Strauss's works, especially that bit Of swinging waltz, the Danube Blue—the dance that made a hit! Why, look, the curtain's coming down! Ah, yes, it was divine! The Opera is just too—Say, where are we going to dine?

THE WHITE ELEPHANT

By MARY IMLAY TAYLOR

EXCELLENCE, it is honorably worth one hundred pesos." As he spoke, the wily Japanese gave the ivory elephant a dexterous touch which showed it to its best advantage.

"Too much by half," I objected. "I'll give you fifty-two pesos, see?"

He shook his head, smiling the tranquil Oriental smile which leads occasionally to murder and sudden death. He looked a thousand years old and was probably thirty-five, but what he did not know about Manila—wasn't worth knowing.

It was late in the afternoon. The hot glare of tropical sunshine on the Escolta, the business thoroughfare of the *intramuros*, cast its reflection into the shaded shop. It shone through the gaudy Japanese umbrellas which were suspended from the ceiling between delicate paper lanterns, decorated with chrysanthemums and endless repetitions of the sacred Fuji, and it caught the gold in wonderful tapestries which glowed with every color of the rainbow. It was a curious place. Bronze dragons lurked under bamboo tables; grinning idols loomed in dark corners, and a little smiling Buddha presided at the end of the long room. The perfume of sandalwood rose as a perpetual incense; above my head was a wonderful carved Lotus flower, the symbol of a life springing from a lowly origin to a splendid maturity.

But the little white elephant—it was just ten inches high and of a pearly tint and an exquisite quality.

"Make it seventy-five pesos, Kishu."

He laughed. His oblique eyes almost closed; his yellow cheeks puck-

ered like frosted persimmons. He turned with deliberation and put the elephant back on the shelf beside the little Buddha and the tortoise. "I not sell today, Excellency."

"Oh, confound you!" I laughed. "Here's your hundred pesos."

I looked up and caught Kishu staring at the elephant; his lower jaw had fallen and he had turned a dull yellow green. I supposed it was the light filtering through a colored umbrella, but the result was ghastly. "There's the money," I repeated.

My voice roused him. He started violently, extending one thin hand automatically like a claw for the gold pieces. He counted them carefully and I saw his fingers shake as he did it. "I will send it tonight, august sir."

"On the contrary, I'll take it myself."

Kishu stared at me, looking a somewhat duller shade of green, but making no effort to hand over the figure. I waited with a fine air of nonchalance, tapping my fingers on the show counter. A light breeze from the open door swung the umbrellas and cast a vivid blue patch on Kishu's very unimportant nose.

"My elephant, if you please."

With an evident effort he pushed away my hundred pesos. "No, Excellency! I sell not the august elephant until tomorrow."

"Oh, the devil!" I ejaculated. "But I've paid today."

"I honorably remember it is very bad luck to sell elephants on Wednesday."

"But you've done it," I remarked

bluntly. "And you took the money. I didn't know you went back on a bargain. His Excellency, the Governor General, was telling me that—"

I knew the potency of that spell. Kishu collapsed. He had been brought up under Spanish rule, and could not quite give up the idea that the Governor General was also Lord High Executioner. He took the elephant from its shelf, but, instead of looking for a box for it, he made for the high screen in the corner.

"Here!" I exclaimed sharply. "I'll take it just so; there's no box needed."

Then he gave it over with a reluctance which he could not conceal. "Very bad luck, Excellency," he observed with perfect gravity.

"Fiddlesticks!" I said delightedly. "You hated to part with it at the last, Kishu—you may as well confess it."

Again he held up both palms. "I very glad to sell always," he declared devoutly. "I very poor man."

But I was engaged in admiring my new possession. No child with a toy was ever more ridiculously pleased; thus does Fate infatuate her victims! "It's really a good piece of work," I remarked cheerfully, and tucking it under my arm walked calmly out of the shop.

A carriage was passing, going slowly because of the throng. I looked into it and met the eyes of Carmen de Paredes, the Rose of Luzon—as men called her. She returned my greeting pleasantly. Then she caught sight of my white elephant and her face changed; she leaned forward, eager, surprised, flushed, charmingly pretty. I held up the ivory with a flourish and she smiled, yet, singularly enough, I thought she looked frightened. She put out her hand with a gesture which I couldn't understand; she— But, pshaw! It was all abruptly ended by her aunt, Señora de Paredes—"Tia Antonina," as she was familiarly called by the irreverent. The old lady caught her niece's hand and drew it down, freezing me with a formal bow as they passed; she had, as I knew, no love for the Americans. I knew well enough,

too, that it was Tia Antonina who turned me away when I called there, yet I was not sure that Carmen really wanted to see me. Oh, there was the rub!

The Rose of Luzon—her true name wasn't Paredes at all. Her father was an Englishman, John Romney Kirke, an officer in the British army, and her mother a *mestiza*, rich and proud. Kirke had married her for money, and that old Spanish Filipino, her father, had hated him. He had hated him as an Englishman, as a heretic and as a needy army officer who had sold his commission; he had hated him, in fact, as Tia Antonina hated me, and for much the same reasons. At last, however, both Kirke and his wife had died before the old man, and the little blue-eyed, bright-haired girl had grown up in Manila, the most beautiful *mestiza* in the islands. Lately old Don Mateo had died also, and she had taken his name with his money, and was a great belle. Sometimes, very rarely, she smiled on me; today she had certainly smiled, so I stood like a fool, looking after her a full minute before I climbed into my own carriage and ordered Sancho to drive me back to my quarters.

Sancho obeyed in the usual leisurely Filipino way, and I had plenty of time to find out how hot it was on the Escolta and to notice the buzz of talk. The natives were excited today and with reason; there had been an attempt on the Governor's life the day before. A young Filipino, Vicente de Vega, had tried to shoot him. The would-be assassin had been captured, and, by some process of intimidation, made to confess connection with a ring of conspirators. It seemed that a number of malcontents had banded together, banked their money as a common fund for revolution and started in to free the islands. Thus far it might be called patriotism, but further on it became conspiracy to murder, for it appeared that a certain number had been selected to draw lots to remove the Governor and some of the other officials by the shortest means

at hand. Vicente de Vega had drawn the magic number and was therefore the first victim; now it remained to be seen whether there would be other attempts. It was possible that their courage had failed; it was also possible that someone would be shot in the back. Therefore there was much low-voiced talk that day.

Later in the afternoon I was in my own rooms searching for a lemon. It's a land of thirst, and I'd already found the bottle. As for the lemons, I had had them in the morning; they must be—

At that moment the door opened and Pedro, my Filipino servant, thrust his head in. "The Padre wishes to see you, señor," he said in his musical English. He stood meekly aside for a short, stout figure in black with a white neckband and clean-shaven jaw. The visitor's face was a clear, pale olive, his eyes keen, his smile benevolent and large.

"I beg pardon. Mr. Compton Rye, I believe?" he said in excellent English.

I bowed, put down the bottle and pushed forward a chair. "Have a seat, Padre."

He took it, and resting his broad-brimmed hat on his knee, turned his inscrutable face toward me, but his eyes fixed themselves at once on the white elephant which I had put on a shelf behind me. I reached for the ivory. "I see you appreciate good carving," I remarked, setting it in the middle of the table, where a ray of sunlight illuminated it with an indescribable warmth. It looked alive, a pygmy elephant; it had the strangest effect upon us in that light—a kind of unholy fascination. I could have sworn it winked an eye! We sat and stared at it a full minute and then the Padre spoke.

"Frankly, señor," he said, in his full, pleasant voice, "I came to see you about this very elephant."

"I've had it only three hours or thereabouts," I replied with amusement. "I think you must be mistaken."

He shook his head, smiling. "No, señor."

I regarded him attentively; undoubtedly the good man was a little demented. "You're a collector of elephants?" I suggested.

He laughed outright. "Señor, I'm a poor parish priest, working among the poorer Filipinos. I never collected anything in my life but Peter's pence."

"Then I don't understand."

"Pardon me, señor," he replied suavely, "but what price will you take for it?"

"I'm sorry to disoblige you, Padre," I said flatly, "but I've no thought of parting with it. Besides," I added, "I've been told that it's 'honorably unlucky' to sell elephants on Wednesday."

For a moment he forgot himself and stared. "I'm extremely sorry, señor," he said. "It is a small matter, doubtless, to you; to another person it is of the first importance."

"Have you any objection to telling me who that person is?"

He turned his hat slowly around on his knee; a ray of sunlight, creeping higher on his breast, gleamed on the little silver cross he wore. "I regret extremely, señor," he said affably, "but that is also impossible."

"And I regret extremely that I can't sell it. Have another glass of wine, Padre, or a whisky and soda."

The Padre considered a moment. "Would an additional offer, in fact, any price that you care to name, be an inducement?" he asked courteously.

I shook my head. "Not the slightest."

He still smiled, but I thought I saw a subtle change in his dark, smooth face. He rose, declining my proffered hospitality. "I can't entirely lose hope, señor," he said pleasantly. "I trust you'll do me the honor of coming to see me, and that, in the meantime, your mind may change."

We shook hands cordially and I heard Pedro stumble as he left the keyhole. Then, as the priest went out, I turned and looked carefully at the elephant, but could discover no peculiarity except superior workmanship, for the sunbeam had moved away from

it and it looked a mere ivory toy, respectable and genuine. I gave up the riddle at last with a sigh of disgust.

But I was not to be allowed to dismiss it from my mind.

The next morning at breakfast time I had an unexpected visitor. Pedro announced that Kishu wished to see me. "Bring him up," I said at once, and presently, hearing them come up together, I noticed with amusement how little the stairs creaked under the soft Oriental tread.

Pedro came with a dish of eggs, a palpable excuse for lingering within earshot, and behind him trailed the Japanese, smooth and courteous, as usual. He greeted me with humility, gently rubbing his hands together and apparently waiting to be addressed. I finished my cup of coffee. "Well, Kishu," I said, "what is it?"

"I come to see Your Excellency," he began. "I come to—I very—"

"Well," I interposed sharply, "what the devil did you come for?"

He looked down, still moving his hands nervously. "Excellency, I very sorry I sold the honorable elephant," he said sadly. "Very bad luck right away—I sick, wife sick, little boy very sick. I come here to buy again, august sir, for one hundred pesos."

I eyed him coolly. "No use, Kishu; one hundred pesos can't get it now."

"Hundred and fifty pesos, Excellency," he persisted.

I shook my head.

"Two hundred pesos." He looked at me eagerly.

I laughed. "Kishu," I replied, "the money isn't coined that would buy that elephant. If it had been I should have sold it to the Padre."

"You will not sell it?" he repeated with stiff lips.

"No."

His oblique eyes were fastened on me with a look of profound interest and I returned it in kind. For a full minute we regarded each other in silence. "I very sorry, Excellency," he said softly. "Very bad luck to me."

"Cheer up, Kishu," I retorted calmly; "it's fair that I keep the elephant."

"Bring very bad luck," he replied grimly.

"Why—if it brings you good?"

He did not see my point. "Excellency, may I see it once more?"

I laughed. "Of course you may kotow to it if you please. It's in the other room," and I pointed.

A suspicion that he meant to steal it crossed my mind, but I intended to be sure that he went empty-handed. Meanwhile he had shuffled off into my sitting room with alacrity. From my seat I could see the shelf on which I had perched the elephant, and a mirror opposite showed me also his back as he stood looking at it. He assumed an attitude of absorbed admiration, and I suppressed a grin of amusement just as Pedro returned with the coffee pot. He missed the Jap, and setting down the coffee pot, darted into the next room. The next instant I saw the Japanese lift his arms, and Pedro uttered an exclamation. I pushed back my chair and appeared at the door just as the two closed, wrestled together for a moment and rolled over on the floor, the Filipino underneath.

I took Kishu by the nape of the neck as one takes a puppy or a kitten. "See here, my man," I said, "you clear out! You can't sell an elephant one day and steal it the next in Manila! That may have been the fashion before the Yankees came, but they're here now and don't you forget it!"

Kishu smiled; he was a pale yellowish green. "I want to touch it, that's all," he said blandly. "I touch it for luck."

We could hear the soft shuffle of Kishu's retreating sandals as he crossed the *patio*. As soon as he was gone I sent Pedro to toast some bread; then I took down my ivory elephant again and set it on the table, examining it, running my finger slowly up the smooth back to the creased neck. Then, in a flash, I knew! I took a firm hold of the head and gave it a twist. The elephant divided itself into two pieces; six folded slips of yellow paper fluttered out upon the table and lay very still in the yellow sunshine.

Six innocent slips of paper, the reincarnation of the rag bag and the paper mill, and yet—I took one up and unfolded it; two Spanish words were written across it in red ink, and a name—"Diego Mandejar." Quickly I unfolded the other five; each bore a different name. Some strange thoughts assailed me. Six slips of yellow paper and on each a different name, and all hidden in an ivory elephant, a mascot, a symbol, a charm more potent than Fatima's hand. And red and yellow are the colors of Spain! Slips to be drawn in a lottery, to be— Suddenly I remembered something, and then I looked out of the window down the long, narrow street where the sun shone on the eastern fronts of the low Spanish houses, while on the western side the shadows were black, sharply cut, fantastic, as they are in the vivid atmosphere of the Orient. I caught a glimpse of purple here, a tinge of red there against a yellow wall; a gaily clad, barefoot *tao* walked down the middle of the street balancing on his erect head, with the wonderful poise of the East, a basket of Calamba oranges, yellow as the gold of Midas, yellow as the slips of paper. At the crossing, looking up intently at my quarters, was the short, black-clad figure of my friend, the Padre. As I looked he picked his way across the dirty street and disappeared under my window. An instant later I heard his voice in the *patio*. I took a cigarette from my pocket and lighted it thoughtfully. There were steps on the staircase. This time it creaked; the Padre was heavy and a Christian.

He came in with his genial smile, but there was trouble in his eye; the man looked worn, older, less buoyant. "Señor," he said abruptly, "I've come again for the elephant, instructed to offer three hundred pesos, which, you must know, is exorbitant—though it's an heirloom."

I glanced up at the elephant and smiled. It was empty; I had the six slips of paper in my pocket. "You call it an heirloom," I remarked. "It can't be a hundred years old; and how

did it come into the possession of Kishu, the Oriental dealer on the *Escolta*?"

"It was stolen by an unworthy servant; we had just been informed of its appearance in Kishu's shop when you bought it and frustrated our plans to recover it quietly."

"Did Kishu know it?"

"That it was stolen? Possibly, even probably, señor."

"Had I given him the chance, he would have kept it, even after I had paid for it," I said. "And he was just here trying to buy it back."

The Padre colored deeply, but said nothing.

"You yourself offer me three hundred pesos, a price out of all proportion to its value." I looked steadily at him as I spoke.

"I offer it?" he said with a deprecatory smile. "Oh, no, señor! I'm a poor priest; I offer nothing. I'm the mouthpiece of its former owner."

I knocked the ashes from my cigarette. "If I should consent to let you have the elephant on one condition, a simple one, would you be willing to comply with it?"

"Very likely," he said promptly, "unless it's a condition that I can't consider."

I laughed a little. "Tell me, Padre," I said abruptly, "are you acting for the Señorita de Paredes?"

"Is that your condition, señor?" he asked, giving me a searching glance.

"My sole condition."

"And if so—" He leaned forward, watching me, his dark face slightly flushed.

"If so"—I met his glance stubbornly—"I will deal with you!"

He drew a long breath. "You are right, señor; I act for Señorita Carmen de Paredes."

I tossed my cigarette out of the window and rose, walking to and fro across the old room while the priest watched me. After a while he began to fidget in his chair and rose also.

"You will deal with me, señor?" he inquired.

"No," I said bluntly, "I'll not deal

with you. I bought the elephant for my own pleasure. I've enjoyed it rather more than I anticipated; I think I've had my money's worth." I reached up and took down the elephant. "Señor Padre, do me the favor to present this to the señorita with the high esteem of Compton Rye."

The priest drew back with a red face. "That is impossible! My instructions were to pay for it, double if necessary, but as a gift—" He shook his head.

I put the elephant back. "As you will," I said.

He bit his lip. The struggle in his mind was plain. To take the elephant as a gift to his young and beautiful parishioner from an American and a heretic! Yet, on the other hand, to lose the elephant! I stood regarding him amusedly, and then remembered suddenly that the customs of the country were hospitable.

"Can I offer you a cup of coffee, Padre?" I asked affably.

But he had made his choice. "Señor, I'll take the elephant on your own terms," he said, "and thank you for it."

"You give me much pleasure, Padre," I said, and handed him the empty elephant with a grim smile. Much good would it do him!

He took it and held out his hand. "Mille gracias," he exclaimed cordially; "the señorita will thank you also, señor."

I was strongly tempted to tell him that I thought she wouldn't, but prudently held my tongue. Yet, when he went out smiling, I was a bit ashamed of the trick I'd played him, and had to quiet my conscience with the recollection that they hadn't played fair with me. Oh, I knew there was a trick behind it all, or something worse, and it troubled me mightily to think that Carmen, lovely, blue-eyed Carmen, was in the thick of it. These revolutionists—what may not one expect?

Of course, I expected to hear from my empty elephant, but several days elapsed and no word came. If the Padre felt that he'd been duped he was game. I honored him for it. But it is

somewhat dull to have your joke fail to come off. I pursued my affairs undisturbed and, as I was keenly aware, unnoticed by the señorita.

The following Monday, therefore, I was returning home on foot and alone about an hour before noon. It was a still, hot day and the city was quiet. As yet there were no more disclosures in regard to the conspiracy that had been outlined by the would-be assassin of the Governor. There were even some who thought he had manufactured a story out of whole cloth and was a poor vagabond without accomplices. Outwardly all was well, but the undercurrent of gossip went on, and occasionally one heard the sharp rattle of rifle practice over at Cavite.

The streets were alive. I passed Chinese and Sikhs, Singhalese and Japs, Europeans and American soldiers in khaki. Some barefoot women, in gay petticoats and loose, kimonolike upper garments, carried huge baskets on their heads, and a fisherman, squat on a low doorstep, sorted his shining fish. The sun shone on yellow walls and dry *nipa* roofs. The very atmosphere was golden with heat. On the corner, over there where a shadow falls from the houses, is the little vender of *lanzones* and *chicos* and bananas, naked except for a pair of peppermint-striped trousers much ventilated with holes. Just beyond him, in a beautiful stretch of light relieved by violet shadows, is the Church of Binondo.

I was passing the main entrance when I looked up and met her eyes.

Carmen was standing alone at the threshold of the church, wearing the graceful charming dress of the high-born *mestizas*; a black lace mantilla, draped carelessly around her head and shoulders, revealed the beauty of her blonde hair and the extreme fairness of her complexion.

"Señorita de Paredes," I said.

She lifted her chin a little, looking down at me from her vantage ground on the step, and I never felt smaller in my life; but having begun, I must end.

"Señorita, a few days ago I gave a white elephant to Padre Ignacio."

She cut me short. "You deceived the good Padre," she said scornfully; "you gave him the empty shell, the worthless white elephant."

I reddened. "I gave him what he asked for, señorita." I was a little angry myself. Little termagant, how lovely she looked! "He didn't trust me," I said stubbornly; "why should I trust him?"

"He's a priest," she said promptly.

"And I'm a heretic."

"Then I suppose it was to be expected," she countered, a flash of humor in her eyes.

"Naturally," I retorted bitterly, "you couldn't expect anything from an unbeliever. Neither could I expect fair dealing from your priest."

"Padre Ignacio is an angel!"

"Possibly, but a little stout, don't you think?"

She averted her face. I thought she wanted to laugh and would not. There was silence for a full minute and we heard the gentle ripple of Filipino gossip across the square.

"Señorita," I said at last, "why should I speak of it to the Padre when he was reluctance itself in the matter of confiding even the barest details to me?"

She turned toward me, her face suddenly colorless. "You have opened it, señor! What was in it?"

I drew a pattern in the dust with my stick. "Six folded slips of yellow paper, señorita, no more, no less."

"Six slips of paper, señor"—her lips trembled—"and on them—"

"Six names."

"Ah, *Dios!*" she cried, and covered her face with her hands.

I watched her a moment in silence, deeply moved. "Will you tell me the riddle, señorita," I asked gently, "and what it means to you?"

"To me—disgrace." It slipped from her lips, and the next moment she drew back, evidently horror-stricken at the admission. "Señor," she whispered, "will you give me those slips of paper?"

But I knew now that they were the names of the six conspirators—

and what had she to do with it? A horrible doubt assailed me. Then I remembered that there was a name like hers on one slip. It was badly written; at the time I had not thought—could it be? "Señorita," I said, "trust me; what is it to you?"

She wrung her hands.

"Carmen," I said gently, "I love you—will you trust me now?"

"Don't speak to me of love, señor! You don't love me! You wouldn't if you knew—"

For one long moment I watched the little boy selling *lanzones*, but I was thinking with all my soul. At last I turned to her. "Señorita, sometimes men do things in the name of patriotism that are bad enough in themselves, but they believe them good, being blind to all but one point of view. I know—you have told me—that I hold the names of the six conspirators who have planned to overthrow American rule in these islands—"

"I have told you?" she cried aghast.

"You have told me. And I love you still."

She put her fingers in her ears.

I stood waiting. What could I do? My duty was plain enough, but what part had she in it? Had I any thought of compromise? God knows! I loved her and the thought of hurting her—

"Señorita," I said again, "trust me; tell me all."

She had taken her fingers out of her ears and stood looking at me in evident despair. "And if I do—you, you are an American and you will do your duty; you will betray my confidence!"

"Carmen, if I never knew before, I know now that you do not love me."

The color went up over her beautiful face, a moment before so pale; even her little ears were scarlet. "And what then, señor?"

"As you do not love me, you may think what ill of me you please," and I turned away.

I hadn't gone two steps before I felt her hand on my arm. "Señor, those slips do truly hold the names of the six conspirators, the patriots, some men call them, who planned to over-

throw your rule here. That wasn't wicked, maybe, in a Filipino, but, señor, they planned to kill, to murder the authorities, to scatter all in confusion. The attempt on the Governor was the beginning. Vicente will suffer for it. There are six others to draw those six lots. I know it now. I did not know it, nor of the meeting at our house, nor did I know that they were hidden in the little elephant, my grandfather's mascot, until it was stolen and they searched wildly for it, thinking it in the hands of the police. They offered Kishu the Japanese five hundred pesos to find it; he buys stolen things and knows the thieves, they say. Yet all the while he had it in his shop. His assistant had bought it and he did not recognize it until, just as you were buying it, he discovered the crease at the neck and knew it must be the one. Poor Kishu! He has wept in vain for his money. I knew none of these things until—but this I know, señor: when you give those six slips of yellow paper, as you will, to the police, you give up to prison and disgrace my younger brother, Luis de Paredes."

I caught my breath. Her hands were trembling on my arm; her lovely eyes looked beseechingly into mine. I couldn't answer; what could I say? She drew back shivering.

"I trusted you," she whispered. "God forgive me—if you betray that trust!"

I looked up. "Do you believe that I will betray it?" I asked.

Her white lips shook. "Señor, there is a story about that elephant. It is a charm, a mascot, a symbol, what you will, and it is said to protect its owner from the evil eye—oh, it's supposed to be as potent as Fatima's hand! My grandfather thought it made his fortune. The poor, foolish, wicked boys! When they hid those papers there they thought it would bring them luck; the 'magic elephant'—that is what men call it here. Alas, must it destroy them all? You—oh, you must do your duty; I know it!"

"Yes," I said slowly, "but I love you." I put my hand into my pocket

and drew out an envelope; in it I had sealed those fatal slips. I gave it to her. "Carmen," I said, "I leave my honor in your hands."

As I spoke, her aunt appeared suddenly behind her and she couldn't answer me, but her face went white. Bowing formally to both, I turned away. The little boy was still selling *lanzones*.

The next day, before twelve o'clock, Pedro came upstairs to announce Padre Ignacio. My heart thumped fast for a moment; I knew I had her answer. He greeted me as usual and laid his hat upon the table. Then he handed me a package wrapped in rice paper; his face was pale.

"Señor," he said, "the señorita told me to give you this. I know nothing of it. I ask no questions; I beg of you to ask me none."

I bowed and took the package, feeling the shape of the magic elephant. The Padre bowed.

"The day is warm, señor," he remarked and picked up his hat.

"Not so warm but that one's heart can feel a chill," I said.

"It is so," he replied simply. "Peace be with you." And he left me, his face still white under its thick coat of tan.

That afternoon I walked into the Governor's office with the magic elephant; I had not even broken the seal on the wrapper. Very carefully and simply I told him the story, leaving out Carmen's name, and handed him the elephant. But I had to teach him the trick of unscrewing it. With great deliberation the Governor turned it over and the slips of yellow paper fluttered out upon the table. Very slowly he unfolded and counted them.

There were six!

I went straight to the Padre, and as I entered his cool, shaded room and looked up at the crucifix upon the wall I felt a curious sensation of unreality. Could it all be true in this sane, everyday place, this busy, heedless town? Then I heard someone cross the *patio*; it was the Padre.

"Señor," he said simply, "there were six slips in the elephant?"

"There were," I replied, "and I—Good God, Padre, what shall I do?"

He made the sign of the cross. "Señor, he is dead. He died last week in Hongkong; we didn't know it until this morning. She gave up the honor of her name for you. She has just told me all."

"Where is she?" I cried. "I—"

He pointed across the *patio* and I saw the gleam of a woman's white dress. In a moment I was beside her. "Carmen," I said, "the Padre has told me. I—"

There were tears in her eyes. "He's dead," she said, "by his own hand.

He hated the task. God rest his soul! As for me, for my name—it doesn't matter, so you did your duty."

"Carmen," I said again, "you—you care?"

She was very pale. "How can it matter? I—I, señor, am his sister."

Our eyes met and for a moment mine held hers; then her tears fell fast. "What fault is it of yours?" I whispered. "You are innocent."

"But my name—" she said trembling, her face flushing in spite of her tears.

"What need to bear it any longer?" I replied. And overhead I heard the Padre's doves coo softly; they alone were watching us.



CHRISTMASTIDE ON FIFTH AVENUE

By EDWIN L. SABIN

FROU-FROU of silk and of satin,
Visions midst veiling and fur;
There on the curb a swart Latin
Proff'ring his busts, connoisseur.
Flutter and jesting and dimples,
Topcoat and meshed ankles slim—
A foreigner vending his simples?
Who has a moment for *him*?

Rhythm of feet on the paving,
Rhythm of joy in the air;
Perfume and sensuous craving,
Carnival brilliant and fair.
Beauty free-limbed and full-throated,
Wealth purple-clad and full fed—
A rose lying draggled, unnoted,
Crushed by the hurrying tread.

Windows with luxury sating,
Thresholds that eddy and stream;
Equipage lined and in waiting,
Varnish and cushion and gleam.
Frou-frou of silk and of satin,
Topcoat by sealskin enticed—
At the marge the sad face of the Latin
Patiently proff'ring a Christ.

THE BECKONER

By ELSA BARKER

ONE day a vision came and beckoned me
Out of the still, gray halls, where solitude
Waits for the guest whose coming must elude
The mocking eyes of Life and Destiny.
I followed, and the vision bade me see
The garden of dreams whose lilies never die,
The rainbow of Love's promise in the sky,
The bower of faith, whose walls are mystery.

Breathless, I cried, "Who art thou?" And he said:
"My name is Might Have Been. I am accurst
By all men, but my boons shall make thee strong.
Take on thy lids my chrism of tears unshed,
My bitter wine of knowledge for thy thirst,
And for thy breast the barren rose of song."



MY REAL LIFE

By HAROLD SUSMAN

RESISTANCE my religion is,
Repression is my creed;
My real life is that which I
Have never dared to lead.



NO HOBNOBBING

MRS. ASKIT—When she's abroad, does she hobnob with royalty?
MRS. NONAUGHT—Mercy, no! Her behavior is always extremely proper.

THE ETERNAL FEMININE

By ARTHUR M. CHASE

PROFESSOR ERNEST SCHUYLER GRIFFIN closed his notebook with a bang, and, judging by the emphasis with which he uttered the last word, he seemed to close his lecture with a bang, too. For the minute he was sick of things. And things in his mind took concrete shape as lectures, the literature of the Elizabethan period and girls. Above all, he decided, as he glanced over the classroom, he was sick of girls. There they were, row behind row, gazing at him earnestly, or staring absent-mindedly, some still scribbling his last words in their notebooks, others eagerly preparing to descend upon him with their interminable questions. Scarcely had the last word of the lecture been uttered, when the whole crowd of girls rose in confusion. Such chattering, such a babel of high-pitched voices, he thought disgustedly. The femininity of it all, the nervousness, the lack of masculine repose and reserve force—how it got on his nerves!

It got on his nerves to such an extent that Marlowe, Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney and other worthies received somewhat less than their due consideration from him, as he parried the eager crowd who thronged round his desk to ask questions and to explain their "difficulties." Not but that he had the highest respect for Marlowe and the others; but in his present mood the task of explaining dead men to live women seemed to him unspeakably tedious and unfruitful. How could he explain any man, living or dead, to these girls? They could not understand a man, at least not yet. Perhaps, later, after marriage, each of them might understand, in part, any-

way, one man. But at present, how could these chattering, fluttering, inexperienced and unfledged females understand one big, boisterous, reckless man like wild Kit Marlowe, for example? They could not do it, any more than he, Ernest Schuyler Griffin, could understand them. He could size them up intellectually; he had a few ideas of his own about their looks; but the real natures of these scores of young women whom he saw every day of the college year, what they thought and felt about matters unconnected with the classroom, or, for that matter, what they thought about him, were complete enigmas to him.

From the lecture room he hurried across the campus to the privacy of his bachelor lodgings. Once within their sheltering walls, he tossed off his coat, dropped his notebook on a chair and lovingly stuffed some tobacco into a short and blackened briar pipe. When it was drawing well, he sat down with a grunt of content at a desk which was disorderly to the heart's desire of a man, and the despair of a woman. This chaos of books propped open, pads, scraps and sheets of manuscript meant something big, something worth while, something with great possibilities which would be talked about, perhaps as far as the other side. Visions of learned reviews from Göttingen, Bonn and elsewhere flitted before his eyes as he lovingly gathered together the carelessly strewn sheets of his last night's work. This was a book in the making, a Book, with a capital B. It was no less a thing, in fact, than "The Hedonistic Influence in Elizabethan Literature," to which he gave all the

time, hopes, dreams and loving devotion which a man might give to his wife.

Hopefully seizing his fountain pen and a fresh pad, he puffed vigorously. Nothing came. He fidgeted, grasped his pen firmly and puffed out a cloud of smoke. Still nothing came. Then he looked up a few references and gazed up at the ceiling for an inspiration—and still nothing came. How absolutely maddening! He had been full of his subject that morning, had scribbled sheet after sheet and in the frenzy of inspiration tossed them aside. But he had broken off to lecture to the Sophomore class on Spenser, Marlowe and others. Sickening thing, that lecture to the Sophomore class—sentimental, squashy, effeminate. How weary he was of the word "feminine," all derivatives and compounds of it and all things pertaining thereto. Lectures to women, recitations by women, consultations with women, reading compositions and theses written by women, hourly, daily, weekly—he was fairly swamped in a sea of femininity. Why had he ever accepted the chair of English Literature at Briarcliff College for Women? Better a job in some out-of-the-way, behind-the-times Western college; better no job at all than this tedious, sapless, effeminating existence.

"It's getting on my nerves," he cried aloud. "It's like feeding a man who is used to beer and roast beef with chocolate creams and cocoa."

"Well, it was all off with the 'Hedonistic Influence' for the present, he reflected gloomily. Those infernal Sophomore girls had killed him intellectually for a while. Girls—he was obsessed with the idea of girls. As he stared at the chaos on his desk he saw girls, brown-eyed, blue-eyed, spectacled, their hair fluffy, marcelled, puffed or smoothed straight, serious girls and frivolous, aristocratic, plebeian, talkative and silent, sensible and silly; and all and every one were girls, girls, girls.

"By thunder," he cried, pounding the desk, "there isn't a man among them!"

Girls, as girls, were not so bad; but in avalanches— He must get them out of his mind for a little.

Picking up a squat little volume of Ben Jonson, his eye ran over the heavy-faced type until it stopped at these lines:

Say, are not women truly, then,
Styled but the shadows of us men?

Rare old Ben Jonson—there was a man! Roisterer, hearty eater, huge drinker, frequenter of taverns, genial founder of the modern club—there was a real man, a big, full fed, red-blooded he-human.

He closed the book with a snap. After all, what he needed was a little of Ben Jonson in his life. This interminable companionship with women—teaching women, golfing with women, going to women's teas, living a mere drop of masculinity in a bucket of a thousand college girls—was taking the manhood out of him. He needed a complete change; he ought to get absolutely away from women and be altogether with men—to see men and hear men and be again a man among men. Even if it were only for an evening, he needed to be surrounded with men and wholly free from feminine influences.

Thoughts of the old days at Berlin and at Bonn came back to him, along with the taste of the *Tucherbrau* and the reek of smoke, while the deep-lunged voices of his student corps made the walls ring with song. And the earlier days at Cambridge, he remembered them—the musty ale in pewter mugs, the flushed faces and sparkling eyes, while the triumphant pæan rang out:

Three cheers for Harvard, and down with Yale!

Great jumping Jehoshaphat! He needed to be a man again, to strike out, to be untrammeled, to be once again a good fellow where good fellows get together.

"Me for the city!" cried the Professor of English Literature at Briarcliff College for Women. "I'll spend a day there with some good sports I know.

I'll pour something stronger than tea down my throat. Hurrah for 'Wine, Woman and Song,' with Woman left out!"

Springing to his feet, he began to pack his bag.

That same evening, at about the time the lights are turned on along the streets, Professor Griffin emerged from the Grand Central Station and turned westward. The street lamps stretching away before him, looked like converging lines of diamonds leading to some softly beautiful region of mother-of-pearl—at least, so the lighted street and the sunset appeared in his appreciative and joyful state of mind. His heart was as light as his bag, which contained only the absolute necessities of a gentleman's toilet. And as he swung along he hummed to a tune of his own improvising:

Say, are not women, truly, then,
Styled but the shadows of us men?

"Ahem!" He cleared his throat vigorously, to give the refrain freer vent.

A lady who happened to be directly in front of him turned her head and shot a glance of icy disfavor at him.

"Wonderful!" he said to himself. "The lady mistakes my innocent cough and thinks me a masher, poor misogynistic me. She little knows the truth, poor lady. I flee from women, not toward them, this happy night."

In high good humor he turned into Fifth Avenue, humming gladly, joyously:

Shadows of us men—
Shadows—shad—ows—of us men.

With runs, trills, crescendo and diminuendo he chanted the pean under his breath. And, lo and behold, directly in his tracks proceeded she of the icy glance! He swerved to circumnavigate her, and she swerved the same way. He quickened his steps to pass her, and she quickened hers, while every little while she threw at him that icy, outraged glance.

"Well," said the Professor to himself, "if you will act like a hen in front of an automobile, why, very well."

Briskly and gaily as before, he strode down the Avenue. And still in front of him, walking as rapidly as he, went the lady of the outraged, icy glances.

"Gorgeous, perfectly gorgeous!" chuckled the Professor. "She has got the sublimely ridiculous idea in her head that I am a masher, and every innocent thing I do only confirms her belief. How like a dear, illogical, absurd woman. Why, you poor deluded soul, I wouldn't speak to you if you were as beautiful as Helen of Troy and a Gibson girl rolled into one. No, my lady, on this happy evening I will not spare one minute to Eve, nor to any one of her innumerable daughters."

Arrived at his hotel, he repaired first to the bar. And there, in due time, the white-clad barkeeper placed in his hands a golden goblet. To be more precise, it was a small glass filled to the brim with a cocktail, golden, oily and seductive-looking, in which a plump olive reposed.

"Another," said the Professor briefly, tossing off the drink.

From the bar he hastened to the telephone booth, and, oh, joy, got word to Tom Spence and Bill and Charley Graves, classmates and good fellows all.

"Hurrah for 'Wine, Woman and Song,' with the Woman left out!" hummed the Professor, as he went upstairs to the hotel office, two steps at a time.

From the desk he went gaily to the elevator. Everything was exactly right; the clerk had even given him his old room on the fourth floor. He stepped jauntily into the elevator, and—thunderation, the offended lady again! She recognized him instantly, and gave him such a look of concentrated contempt and dislike that he quailed involuntarily. He had to stand beside her, and he did so very circumspectly, hat in hand, as the elevator started upward.

"What floor is Room 472?" asked the lady suddenly and ungrammatically.

"Fourth," shouted the Professor.

It had exactly the effect of a question and an answer, although the Pro-

fessor had spoken quite innocently and involuntarily to the elevator man, as his floor approached. For an instant the lady glared at him, and seemed about to speak. All previous glances were of a mild and friendly character compared with this. The Professor held his breath. Then the elevator stopped at the fourth floor with a little jar, and with the bell boy at his heels, he made his escape.

"Free at last," he chuckled. "Oh, the delicious irony of it! She's ready to swear now that I'm the boldest, most unspeakable masher she ever heard of."

After a hasty toilet in his room, he lit a cigarette and surrendered himself to delightful anticipations. Good old Tom and Bill and Charley, all gathered together round a table—why that would be like old times. He hastily planned a dinner—oysters, a juicy, thick steak and ale—a man's dinner. And oh, the fun and the jokes and the wit and the good strong man's talk that would go round when those four put their legs under one table again!

Too happy to sit still, he went down to the restaurant, ordered the dinner and then wandered restlessly about awaiting his guests. Not a soul in that vast caravansary as happy as he, as he passed from gorgeous rooms to gorgeous corridors, rooms and corridors alike thronged with handsomely dressed women. No women in his, tonight, he thought happily. The dinner would be in the grill room, which was immune from the intrusions of the fair sex; afterward they would adjourn to a club. His Paradise tonight would be strictly Eveless.

Humming lightly:

"Say, are not women, truly, then,
Styled but the shadows of us men?"

he entered one of the reception rooms, a showy apartment, splendid in crimson and gold. Still humming, he dropped into a plush and mahogany abomination which enjoys the name of *tête-à-tête*. The other seat, the immediately contiguous, the very intimate seat, was occupied; and glancing casually at the occupant, he was in-

stantly petrified. The lady of the outraged glances!

"By Jove!" he thought, when he could think. "Ben Jonson knew what he was about when he called women shadows of us men. And this one surely is the shadow."

She was aware of his presence. Out of the corners of her eyes she regarded him with all the friendly cordiality of a cat whose dinner is invaded by a dangerous-looking dog. And she sat bolt upright, braced, as it were, to repel boarders. It was too absurd. It was more than absurd—it was a downright shame. It put him in a false and ridiculous position, and caused the lady a lot of entirely unnecessary discomfort. Yet what could he do? It seemed better to suffer from her unjust suspicions, and let her suffer, rather than explain to her that she was making a fool of herself.

As the Professor peeped cautiously at his *vis-à-vis* and met her look of catlike wariness, he was both tickled and distressed. In fact, he was more distressed than tickled, for, being a good-hearted fellow and a gentleman, he would have liked to put an end to her plainly uncomfortable situation. He considered addressing a slight remark to her, a perfectly conventional remark about the odd coincidence of their having met in so many places. If she responded, he could allay her fears in a few brief and happily expressed sentences and then stroll away. If she were unpropitiatory at the start, the strolling would begin sooner.

But how to begin? What remark, uttered in his easiest and most pleasant conversational tone would induce her to respond? He gazed at her reflectively out of the tail of his eye, and met in return from the corners of hers a look so watchful, so hostile, so feline, that it made him jump. And then he decided to end the matter. A lot of absurd circumstances had made it look as if he were dogging the lady. She was miserable, and he resented her unjust suspicions. He would end it.

He made up his mind, after a little

cogitating, to explain the ridiculous coincidence in the elevator. Any gentleman would explain, and apologize. The incident, once understood, was laughable; the ice would be broken, the lady reassured, and he could retire gracefully with the consciousness of an unpleasant duty well done.

He cleared his throat, and turning toward the lady he began in a pleasant voice:

"I hope you will let me explain—"

His hope was blasted and his explanation cut short by an instant and shrill scream from the lady. She jumped to her feet, and with a louder scream, which made the Professor's ears ring, she gave him a resounding slap on the face. Before he could recover his wits or get to his feet, the room was in an uproar. People wheeled around, sprang up, started forward. A hotel attendant, who had been standing in the doorway, blew a loud blast on a whistle. And the bewildered Professor looked for something to fall on him and cover him.

"For heaven's sake, madam—" he began in an agitated voice.

The attendant in the doorway beckoned violently to someone out of sight, and then ran into the room, followed by a policeman.

"I must explain," cried the Professor, thoroughly aroused.

"Oh, oh, oh!" screamed the lady for the third time.

"Here, quit that! What's the matter?" said the policeman gruffly, shoudering his way up to them.

"He's a masher," cried the lady.

"I ain't," the Professor exploded, with more emphasis than grammar.

"He is," cried the lady hysterically. "He followed me down Fifth Avenue, humming and coughing and displaying all the odious, contemptible tricks of his kind. He dogged me to this hotel and had the effrontery to speak to me in the elevator. And, finally, as I was sitting here alone and unprotected, he came up, sat down beside me, stared at me and finally—finally he tried to start a conversation. Oh, he is unspeakable—a brute! If a creature like him

can be at large, how can we defenseless women be safe?"

By this time a circle had formed round the group, and when the lady concluded her harangue by bursting into tears an unfriendly murmur arose. The Professor looked at the circle of faces, some angry, some contemptuous, some coldly curious, and never in his life had he dreamed of the shame and humiliation of that minute. And then his Anglo-Saxon fighting spirit came to his rescue.

"Don't condemn me on circumstantial evidence," he began, squaring his shoulders. "I had no more desire to speak to this lady than I have to commit murder."

Someone laughed derisively, and the lady sobbed louder. The Professor felt miserably that he had made a bad start.

"It's all an absurd mistake," he said earnestly, addressing the weeping woman, the crowd and the policeman.

"Aw, cut it out," replied that worthy gruffy. "Do you make a complaint against him, ma'am?"

"Indeed I do," cried the lady from behind her handkerchief.

"All right. Come along, young feller," said the Arm of the Law briskly.

"You don't mean that I'm arrested?" cried the dumfounded Professor.

"You bet I do," returned the policeman, laying a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Do you want me to walk with you?" the Professor asked.

"I guess you won't want me to drag you," returned the policeman grimly.

"Hands off, then, and I'll come," said the Professor gamely, stepping forward.

The policeman kept at his side, and together they passed through the circle of staring spectators, walked through the corridors, where more people stared, and went out into the street, where every human being, it seemed to the humiliated Professor, had been transformed into one, big, inquisitive, staring eye.

He never forgot that walk. Like most respectable, law-abiding people,

the police seemed to him a sort of frontier guard of society, engaged in dealing with a lawless and criminal class which were as remote from his own world as the desperadoes of Arizona or Montana. The Arm of the Law was a very abstract conception to him, and was stretched out to seize the unpleasant kind of evildoers whom he knew about very vaguely, only through the newspapers. But that the police should take him in charge, that the Arm of the Law should reach out and seize him—that was in the nature of a cataclysm. If the water in his clean, white porcelain tub, into which he blissfully sank every morning of his life, had suddenly risen in a mad, raging torrent and swept him struggling away, he would not have felt more completely astounded and upset.

The green lamps of the police station seemed to throw out a baleful light as he approached. Stoically the Professor entered the door, for stoicism had come to his aid, to help him out in the general collapse of his ordinary life. Stoically he answered the gruff questions as the lieutenant at the desk took his "pedigree." Nor was it the exact pedigree of Professor Ernest Schuyler Griffin which was entered on that police blotter. The Professor had dabbled in fiction, and the statements which he made to the police lieutenant had to do with one Ben, or Benjamin Jonson, whose career not even the Professor's most intimate friends could have associated with his own.

The first unpleasant formalities over, the Professor gave the lieutenant a long and searching look. The latter had good eyes, bright, merry, tolerant eyes.

"Look here," said the Professor abruptly. "Can I tell you something—you alone?" and he glanced at several individuals standing near who had the air of reporters.

The tolerant eyes looked at him squarely.

"I guess you can," said the lieutenant. "Come up here to the desk."

In a low voice, a very low voice, the Professor told his story. Whatever it was, the policeman and the individuals who might have been reporters itched with curiosity. For, as the Professor talked on and on in a low, earnest voice, the lieutenant's eyes grew merrier, his face grew red, and he twitched, he shook.

"And now," said the Professor in conclusion, "what shall I do?"

"Do?" said the lieutenant in a rumbling voice. "Go and telephone your friends to bail you out, and sit on that bench till they come. No, the boys won't get your story."

Later in the evening the Professor sat at a table in a club with his three friends. And, although this was to have been his night of revelry, the Professor's first highball remained at his elbow untouched.

"Too bad we don't know that darned woman's name and address," said Tom, the lawyer. "If we could get her not to press her complaint, why, you'd be discharged at court tomorrow. But if she comes there'll be a lot of talk and maybe a fine. You couldn't give me a clue to her identity, could you, Griffy, old boy?"

"Not a clue," replied the Professor moodily. "I know her simply as the Shadow."

"The Shadow—pretty good," said Charley. "By the way, I read something recently which is rather à propos."

Drawing a notebook from his pocket he turned over the leaves.

"How is this:

"Say, are not women, truly, then,
Styled but the shadows of us men?"

"Piffle," said the Professor. Only that was not the word he used.



ON BEING AN OLD MAID

By AMY LYMAN PHILLIPS

WHY don't you write an essay?" said the Editor, toy-
ing with the Filipino dagger which he used for a paper cutter.

I snickered. I have written papers on how to thaw out frozen water pipes, and articles on the elusive charm of the onion and various other domestic topics, but essays—it was too funny!

"I never wrote an essay in my life," I acknowledged. "I don't believe I could. You see, I'm not clever like Repplier and Bell and— But I'll write you an essay, my maiden effort, on the only subject upon which I feel qualified to write at present. It's upon 'Being an Old Maid,'" I concluded.

"Fine!" he said, rapping his desk with the dagger. "Fine! That's a good subject. Lots of comedy."

It was my turn to feel injured. "Pardon me," I said frigidly; "it is far from being a comedy. It's a tragedy, one of the greatest tragedies in the world."

When I reached home I went at once to hunt up my dictionary to see what the word "essay" really comprehended. I couldn't find it; then I suddenly remembered that Archie Barrington, across the hall, had borrowed it to put in a chair so his terrier could sit on it at table. "Never mind," I thought; "it's probably from the French verb *essayer*, to try, so I'll essay the essay just the same without Webster's assistance."

It's terribly difficult, after all. Emerson and Schopenhauer and Lamb and all the rest are such purists and such stylists and such philosophers—I wonder if an essayist *must* be a philosopher?

I don't know, I'm sure; but I do know that if an old maid wants to get any comfort out of this barren existence, *she* must be one. It's hard sometimes—but it's imperative.

Sometimes, when I am standing in front of the mirror and pulling out the gray hairs and wondering if, after all, I hadn't better go to Simon and have it—the hair—dyed just a little on the temples, I feel very much grieved to think of performing that sad ceremony alone, when so many women have it done by their husbands. Then I reflect when men go in for hair pulling they are more than likely to pull irrespective of color, and that some precious brown hairs would come out along with the white ones—so that, after all, perhaps it is better to be an old maid and do it for myself.

"But," interrupts a still, small voice, "if you weren't an old maid you wouldn't have gray hairs."

What? That's right—I wouldn't. I am firmly convinced that nothing but worry over my mother's worrying for fear I may never have "Mrs." on my tombstone is responsible for those gray hairs—and nothing else.

I feel suddenly very old, and I wonder, at this rate, how long it will be before my hair is perfectly white, and if it is true that for every white hair a woman pulls out two new ones come in at once. Then I comfort myself with the cheering thought that the last census proved that, in the State of Massachusetts alone, there were over 75,000 old maids—real, old maids, mind you! Misery loves company; I shall go to Massachusetts and live when I have given up all hope of

a husband. Perhaps my spinsterhood won't be quite so conspicuous among such a large number of the chosen.

Some maniac invented a chart showing a woman's chances for marrying at certain ages. A book agent, with the "Home Compendium of Useful Knowledge" in cloth and half calf, turned to it one day and showed it to me. Failing to interest my mother in "what to do until the doctor comes," he looked upon me to display proper enthusiasm over this encyclopedia, and, with a patronizing smile, he turned the leaves until he came to page 569—I remember it well.

"See," he said cheerfully; "this will interest you, madam."

I looked. Yes, it was exceedingly interesting. A black and white sketch at the top of the page depicted a hundred or more maidens labeled "Age 18; chances of marrying, 100 per cent." Another group of eighty or so at twenty years, had ninety per cent chances for matrimonial bliss, and another, at twenty-two, had eighty per cent, and so on. He ran a grimy forefinger down the page until he reached the thirties. "There! This will about strike you," he began. "Thirty-three—only eight per cent chance of getting married and—"

I rose and withdrew frigidly as mother showed the tactless book agent the door. For I was only twenty-nine then, you see, and even my enemies acknowledged that I didn't look more than twenty-five. Still, even from a book agent, it hurt.

It is bad enough to read jokes in magazines about being an old maid. Once, when I was seventeen, I began a scrap book of jokes about old maids and mothers-in-law. I remember thinking: "When I have a mother-in-law, I shall get this out, when she visits me, for her to read." It never occurred to me, in my sweet lexicon of youth, that some day I should burn the book of sad little jokes because I had become an old maid. But that is precisely what happened.

The transition from girlhood to

spinsterhood is very gradual—but the shock of discovery is always like an icy plunge in its suddenness. I often think that becoming an old maid is like going through the long, corkscrew tunnel of the St. Gothard railway. One starts, in the sunlight, from Gösscheningen, where the grass was never so green nor the sky so blue—then suddenly plunges into unfathomable blackness as the train enters the first tunnel. This is like the feeling one has after she has refused to marry someone—as though she were taking her first step toward spinsterhood, and that matrimonial opportunity neglected will never come again. Then, suddenly, there is a flash of light, and one plunges once more into the glorious sunshine, with entrancing views of Alpine peaks, white with snow, delightful little toy villages perched on the mountain sides, fat cows grazing on emerald pastures and the faint tinkling of their bells heard above the roaring of the train. This is like the beginning of interest in the attentions of another man—when suddenly the proposing point comes again, and again the train plunges into another tunnel, just a bit longer and blacker than the first. And so on from man to man, from tunnel to tunnel, until, emerging "over the Alps in Italy," one grows older and older, and opportunity after opportunity is let slip—and even the wonderful sunset on Lugano does not bring compensation when one realizes that one is over thirty and that she is an old maid. Doubtless she will learn in time to appreciate the beauty of the sunset; but the last time I saw it dancing in front of my eyes was when my attention was called to that little group of spinsters of "over thirty," and the words of the book agent, "eight per cent chance of getting married," rang in my ears and drowned the tinkling of the cow bells on the Lombardy pastures.

One by one the friends of your youth slip away from you into homes of their own. One by one nice men you used to be a sister to come exulting to "tell you first" of the great

happiness that has come to them. And oh, how fast they grow away, after they have once started! And how few of the gay young wives approve of the old friendships of their husbands after they are married! Presently you meet a man, and after a moment's chat with him he says: "I'd like to ask you to step into Sherry's and have a cup of tea and chat over the old days, but—but—"

"I know," you finish, smiling at his embarrassment. Then you lie cheerfully: "I have an engagement anyway—why, I'm ten minutes late, as it is. Good-bye. So glad, etc., etc." Then you curse inwardly over the fact that, just because Billy is married to Nell, you may not continue the dear old friendship of years' standing and go in and chat in the old familiar corner over the mutual friends who, one by one, have dropped over the horizon into that land of oblivion. And for peace and consolation you rush uptown to dine with a dear married couple old enough to be your father and mother, and after dinner, you all work on jig-saw puzzles together with old Benny Benedict, who has dropped in. Your puzzle is Love's Young Dream, and Benny's is La Belle Otero in abbreviated costume. And so it goes.

But this—this is the tragic part of being an old maid. You find men of your own age basking in the smiles of pretty girlets of eighteen or so, with never a glance in your direction. And those who seem attracted to you are old beaus of hoary head and tottering step, callow youths who are too young for the eighteen-year-olds to notice, who fall in love with you violently and hint darkly at running away with you as soon as they have saved up enough money. And—oh, more dangerous than all the rest—those dear men, a few—only a few—years older than yourself, married to careless, extravagant, thoughtless wives, who live the butterfly life and crave the attentions of other men—any men save those who belong to them. These men, plodding away in the harness to earn money for

the Paquin gowns and Lewis hats, and starving for sympathy and love and companionship, realizing too late that they and all their sacrifices are taken as a matter of course by their wives, craving the love for which they have been cheated into paying the great price and finding that it is only counterfeit—and pleading oh, so eloquently with their poor, starved hearts in their voices, for friendship and understanding and *camaraderie*—for all that you may give and all that they may take.

The old maid is generally proof against the ardor of the youth who bores her with his impetuosity and irritates her with his lack of poise and his inability to talk on any subject but love, football and tennis. The old beaus amuse her; and if she comes in contact with a man of her own age, she has to be so careful to conceal her interest that he immediately calls her cold and unsympathetic and rushes off to console himself at the shrine of some gushing, giggling young person who will flatter him in one breath and poke fun at his "old foggy ways" in the next. But the married man who so eagerly seeks "platonic friendship"—the man who is so unselfish and so kind, who knows just when not to talk if one is tired, just what charming little attentions like a footstool, a cushion behind her shoulders or a screen moved up to keep away a draught will touch her—oh, he is dangerous; but his companionship is sweet, and the spinster who has strength to resist his allurement, even though she knows his wife is flirting violently and planning an elopement in the next room, deserves almost any reward the good God may give. But rewards for being good seem never to be forthcoming; it is only punishment for swerving from the narrow path that one may bank upon.

Oh, how we hate these smug young matrons in their new frocks, their dreams of hats and their narrow bands of gold upon the third finger. We could manage the frocks and the millinery, perhaps; but the other? Ah, could we? And would we, where we could?

Sometimes I sit and think: "Why am I a spinster, after all?"

Introspection is not always elevating—sometimes it is downright humiliating. Then, in my mind's eye, I conjure up pictures of all the men whose paths have crossed mine, from the handsome, boyish lover with his soul shining from his nice eyes, pleading for what I could not give to him, down to—to the last one—the one who may not take all that I might give even if he were free to take it.

There was Teddy—my first proposal at sweet sixteen. It died a natural death, thank Heaven, before I was seventeen. I saw Teddy the other day. His hair is quite white, and he has three olive branches and a jealous wife. "Ah, Polly," he said; "if only—"

Then there was West. West was of the "cold roast" Boston type, and every day he climbed his family tree to the top and played among its branches. I think his love for me was very sincere—but his family disapproved of me because of my position as companion to a lady, which they considered to be very menial. So ridicule saved West from a *mésalliance*—and me from the family. He married his cousin, who was secretary to the Daughters of the American Revolution. I have often wondered whether I ever remembered to tell him that my great, great granduncle was a general in the Revolution, and that one of my remote ancestors was one King Hugh Capet of France. I don't think I ever did—but after all, I'm glad.

Harry? Harry was generous as piles of music and pounds upon pounds of candy denoted. But—awful thought—Harry had false teeth; and I always imagined how I should hate to see them in a glass of water at night. But he married a girl who didn't mind the dentistry, and is, I believe, very happy.

Bertie—oh, Bertie loved me very much indeed. But he was short of stature and so very impetuous, catching my hands and kissing them and calling me by all sorts of nauseous pet names—well, Bertie was very *good*; but he was altogether out of the question.

Then there was Georgie—Georgie was what my young brother vulgarly termed a "sawed-off," too. And Georgie was—I regret to say it—but he was "near," as dear old New England women term it. I called it "stingy" then, but now I know that it was only prudence. And while I sit and write paragraphs for domestic journals on cookery to eke out a miserable living, the girl Georgie married to spite me is having the time of her life with a trip to Europe every year, her own motor car and a Russian sable coat. Yet Georgie is as broad as he is tall, now, and there is a bald spot on the top of his head. His hands are moist and feel like clams when he shakes yours, and he *will* say, "between you and I." So, after all—I'm glad it wasn't Georgie.

Frank—dear, sunny Frank—Oh, there were three Franks! The first one—we simply drifted apart; the second—we fell out because his grandmother *would* put sugar in her claret, and I irritated him because he thought I wasn't sufficiently awed when he first showed me around New York. I had read all about it in guide books, and when it came to history, could tell him a few things he never knew. And so, we quarreled. The third? We disagreed on religion. That was sufficient.

How many there were! And those who loved me best I never could have loved. I always had many true and loyal friends—and it seems now, as I look back, that those who had my frankest friendship, my *bonne camaraderie* and genuine affection, were those who did not appreciate it and who spoiled it all by becoming sentimental.

Then there were those whom I liked, or thought I did—which amounted to the same thing. Those were the friendships I spoiled. But, through it all, there were and are still some dear and loyal friends, dear chaps, who always were—are now—always will be, I feel—dependable. Is one of them a scientist pottering away in his laboratory? Is another deep in musty tomes in his Greek classics? Is still another so

bound up in engineering problems that women—save two or three good comrades—have no place in his scheme of things? But, though their interests are divided, these men, when they are needed by their friends, they are *there*—always sympathetic, ready to drop everything and to serve as best they may those who have their confidence. Bless them, they make spinsterhood bearable sometimes—even if only by a hurried note, a hastily wrapped book or a nugget from the mines bringing its message across a continent in a dirty brown paper wrapper.

Then, there was another—one who took and drained dry of every emotion and every advantage and every sympathy the five best years of my life. Brilliant—but selfish; tender—but deceitful; generous—but dishonorable in business; truthful—that was his virtue—but living a lie every day of his life.

That romance was serious to the troubadour point—then the deluge. Those who think they know say he jilted me. He is married, too—to a fat German *frau* who, he thought, had money. He gave me my most cruel wounds—for I cared very much for him. But now—I love him because I have had such a fortunate escape from spending my life with him. I tremble sometimes to think of the unhappiness that would have resulted when our two natures clashed, as they would inevitably have done—as they did do! And now I feel very sorry for him—and I feel kindly toward him and wish him joy. But I say in my heart of hearts: "Better live a life of single blessedness forever than to have married *him*!"

After that—fleeting affairs, but no serious ones. Fate decrees that when I am serious the party of the second part shall be flirting. When I am oblivious to charms of feature or bank account—then it is the "dog that died." And why? Because I have always been true to the message that is graven on my heart: "Marry for love alone."

But this is beginning to take on a serious note—a tragic one, as it were. It is the irony of fate that the men I

meet will not credit me with virtues I possess; they will persist in adorning me with charms which are not—never have been—mine. For instance, I am domestic. Yet my life has been spent since I reached a marriageable age in hotels and in foreign lands and in almost constant travel—anywhere but at home. "A girl who has always traveled," these wise men argue, "will always be restless; she won't want to settle down in a home. She likes hotels and gaiety and crowds of people and all that sort of thing that you loathe, old man. No, she won't do at all."

And yet—and yet—I think I should be the happiest woman in the world if I could smash my trunks to splinters, settle down in some quiet corner of the earth and have all my possessions about me—and a kitchen, a wonderful kitchen where I could experiment and cook to my heart's content—cook the things *he* liked. That is my idea of Heaven—a cozy, comfy kitchen with tiled walls and marble table and geraniums in the window and a shining range—and a couch along one side, where one could camp down while waiting for something to bake or brew—and a shelf full of books—cookbooks of many lands—above, just where one might reach up for "Brillat Savarin" or "With a Saucepan over the Sea" or "La Cuisine Canadienne." I want a maid to do my hair and look after my clothes—but the cooking? I want to do that myself.

"Old maid" is no longer considered good form in speaking of a spinster. One should say "bachelor maid." That term is supposed to invest its wearer with a certain dignity. The *vieille dame* of the French is hardly more kind; but, somehow, "bachelor maid" seems to indicate the business of spinsterhood. Most women wage earners call themselves, beyond a certain point, "bachelor maids." And the term carries with it, too, a certain latch-key license, mannish attire and cigarettes.

A maiden who is a good Catholic may become the bride of the Church

and take the veil in a dignified manner. But one who is not must brave disappointment after disappointment, paint her faded cheeks into pitiful semblance of youth, pull out the white hairs, dress like a débutante and then wonder why her alluring bait catches no fish. There are as many in the sea, she argues; why, then, do they refuse even as much as to nibble?

A daring and brazen Suffragette may acknowledge with pride that she would rather be a spinster all her days and devote her life to the cause than to marry a mere man. But most old maids, I'll wager, commit perjury when they declare that they never want to marry and are happier single. How many of them have heard Anna Held warble, "It's Delightful to be Married," without a sympathetic thrill somewhere in the vicinity of the spinal column?

There are almost as many varieties of old maid as there are of the Euca-lyptus. There is the unconscious one, who does not know until she is hopeless that she never has been anything else from the cradle but a spinster. There is the drab, spectacled variety, and there is the clubby sort, who is always working on papers which she reads that her sisters may learn how to bring up children—the proverbial "old maid's children"—the one who nurses the woes of a lost love and the one who goes into Settlement work to patch her broken heart. There is the species who never was and who never would be invited to adorn a sane man's fireside, and there is the extravagant daughter of wealth whom no wealthy man would, and no poor man could, lead to the altar. Then there is the one who is "waiting"—waiting through the best years of her life—and for what? Usually for an ideal that will be rudely shattered if she ever attains it. The devoted daughter whose parents cannot spare her and who sacrifices herself to them. The busy woman who is self-supporting and hasn't time for matrimony, and the poor girls—the cities are full of them—who never have opportunities of meeting eligible men.

And—but one might run on forever enumerating the *raisons d'être* of old-maidom.

Philosophically speaking, being an old maid isn't so bad—when one has a delightful home and doting parents, no worries over financial problems and making both ends meet. Indeed, it may be a very delightful existence, with plenty of hobbies to ride and plenty of means to equip them properly and plenty of time to ride them.

But—for the self-supporting woman who lives in her trunk in a hotel or a hall bedroom, politely speaking, it is Hades. I'll wager that not more than one in a million doesn't pine for a home of her own and release from the *bête noire* of the weekly room rent and meal ticket. Poor things—they don't even dare stop working to be ill. Have they a headache or a pain? They must work just the same—and with a cheerful face, or run the risk of being docked a day's pay if they sit home nursing their woes. Do they fall ill? There is, in most cases, no place for the spinster invalid but in some ghastly hospital ward. A spinster becomes very intense in her sorrows, very enthusiastic over her few joys and very bitter in her hatred of the gay and careless young matron who takes all her matrimonial gifts as a matter of course—especially when she doesn't—and so many do not—appreciate her husband and her home properly. Does the matron have a charming little dovecot and someone to run up its steps eagerly to clasp her in his arms at the day's end? As likely as not she pouts and says, "Oh, look out for my hair! I've just had it dressed," and frets because she is tired of the servant problem and wants to run down to Palm Beach or the Hot Springs for a month, just when the man is in the depths of business worries and ill able to afford the time or the money for this jaunt in fashionable hoteldom. His home is his palace—but it is her cage; and she beats her little wings against its bars and makes herself very miserable and unhappy because of what she calls her "bondage." She relates her

woes tearfully to her spinster friend. And the friend politely affects sympathy, while all the time she may be saying to herself: "Oh, you foolish, foolish woman! What would I not give for the security and protection and love which you value so lightly?"

I wonder which she wants most—the home or the husband? I should say the husband. For, given him, this *bon camarade* and loyal friend and possibly the ardent lover—the home will naturally take care of itself if there is any truth in the adage: "Home is where the heart is."

Ah! An old maid can give lessons in loneliness. Externally, she may be very brave and very gay, but there is always the inevitable gnawing at her heart. She is naturally affectionate as to temperament—but she has no outlet for her full heart—that wellspring of pure love running over for some lucky dog, if he only knew it.

She may be ever so successful in business—but there is always an aching void. She longs for someone to come home to her at night, when the day's work is done. A pair of strong arms to creep into—a sleepy hollow in a broad shoulder to lay her head in and a warm cheek to press her own against tenderly. She wants to be wife to him and mother—both in one. For the maternal instinct is strong in old maids—and in all men whom they love they see two men—one the strong, protective, asserting man—the other, the little boy to be loved and mothered and petted and humored. For all men retain through life the same traits that made their mothers laugh and cry over them like an April day. And then—is there an old maid living who does not know intuitively the feeling of warm, fat little arms clasped about her neck and the ecstasy of a yielding little body cuddled close in the hollow of her arms and sweet, wet kiss of baby lips planted on her cheek? People laugh over "old maid's children." Let them laugh. Many an old maid has more of maternal instinct than these bridge playing fashion plates who are never separated from their Pomeran-

ians, but leave the children to pick up various bits of knowledge from promiscuous associates, while Bridget and the policeman make love to one another in the park.

The old maid is generous; she wants to give—to give of the wealth of love and tenderness which has been accumulating with interest for all these years in her big, warm heart. What treasure places are some of the spinster hearts! There is in them that which the wealth of Golconda could not buy, but which is lavished upon the lucky man who discovers this treasure. She deems it a privilege to give it to him, with no thought of equal return; giving is sufficient happiness to her, poor, starved creature that she is. And yet—if she is wise—she knows how to give judiciously—how to keep always something in reserve—a hint of added treasures as a reward to him for being particularly nice.

Oh, she knows—she knows, this old maid of ours. She is versed in the lore of love—but she locks her knowledge within her breast and shuts her lips resolutely upon words of tenderness and endearment. Her naked ring finger is a barrier to the expression in which her wedded sister revels wickedly. But she feels—ah, God, how she feels! Far more than anyone may compass. And while her feeling brings suffering in its wake, she still thanks Him who made her for giving her such infinite capacity for joy and for sorrow. For when joy comes, it is very great indeed—such joy as her apathetic sister has never known. And she has her reward, when, as sometimes happens even outside novels—she meets the Right One—late in life though it may be. She has the satisfaction of hearing him say: "Oh, my dear, my dear! Think of all the wasted sweetness of those years we might have had together if I had only known you before—known you as you are!" And she answers: "Not wasted, dear man; don't say that. But kept in bond—kept for you."

Sometimes, if an old maid expresses a desire for a home—a man may say to

her: "But think of all the responsibility it entails. You would never be contented tied down to household drudgery—you who have lived your life in hotels, where you have had no care or thought over the service. The responsibilities are so great—"

Responsibility! Tommyrot! What woman is there who isn't quite willing to assume these dreadful responsibilities when they will bring her the home of her dreams, her protector and her lover? A woman who shirks responsibilities like that should be led to the guillotine. She shouldn't be allowed to live. Just as if an old maid didn't have responsibilities—and worse ones, too, sometimes than those entailed in

the keeping of a house in order and food in the larder. And who of us is free from responsibility? A person who evades such responsibilities as these usually has no character—no stamina either moral or mental. Responsibilities? Give them to me! *I'll* take care of them.

All this space taken up—and no essay! But I have it! I shall call upon a selected list of spinsters whom I know, and they shall tell me for my symposium upon, "Why I am an Old Maid," exactly why they are. That will settle it beautifully. And yet—I haven't confessed myself. Why am *I*? That's easy; *I am an old maid—because!*



QUANTITY, NOT QUALITY

By ELEANOR RIVENBURGH

YOU say you think my figure fine,
You say, in fact, it's quite divine,
And beg me please not to decline
To be your bride.

But, ah, for you—I thought you knew—
One figure, sir, is quite taboo.
How many, tell me, pray, have you—
Then I'll decide.



NOTHING is too much trouble for the right woman to do for the right man, or for the right man to do for the right woman—after he has had his dinner and smoke.

AS a place of residence, a fool's paradise is to be preferred to a hell of reality.

DEGAN

By CAPTAIN WARREN DEAN, U. S. A.

EARLY in August one hundred recruits were sent to Fort Graham to fill vacancies in the cavalry. They were quartered in a vacant set of barracks, with non-commissioned officers placed over them and their general instruction supervised by Captain Blake. This officer being a firm believer in the Rooseveltian theory of strenuousness, the "rookies" were kept on the jump from early till late. Delinections of whatever nature, big offenses or small offenses, were severely punished, Blake believing that as the recruit is trained so will the soldier grade, and that recruits were as plebes and must learn as by the rod.

No one could deny that the result was good. The recruits showed up well at inspection and jumped to attention at the approach of an officer more quickly than most of the old soldiers. Captain Blake was proud of them—and of himself. He felt that his theory had proved the correct one, and on the further theory that a good thing should be pushed along, he increased the hard work at every opportunity. By September Blake was not loved. He was, on the contrary, cordially disliked, and was also feared by his recruits, as only recruits know how to fear and inferiors know how to hate.

September tenth was pay day. On the morning of the eleventh Blake was shy fifty-seven recruits. This startling number of absentees was a matter so serious as to cause the officer of the day to report it immediately, in order that the Colonel might take what steps he saw fit without delay. The Colonel

saw fit first to send for Blake. That officer and his methods were greeted with a wrathful outburst.

"They have deserted, I tell you!" roared the Colonel from the folds of his bathrobe. "And it is due to your damned system! A nice report for the Department, isn't it? Fifty-seven recruits deserting at one time! Whoever heard of such a thing? We'll have an inspector here in twenty-four hours!" The Colonel's face was of purple hue as he glared at Blake.

The adjutant wisely refrained from saying the things that came into his mind. He forbore to observe that the Colonel had had plenty of time to relieve him if he had not approved of his system. However, he suggested that probably the recruits were on a plain and very usual "pay day jag."

"Pay day jag!" roared the troubled Colonel. "Do you suppose fifty-seven of them are going to lay themselves liable to your system of punishment for nothing but a jag? They've deserted, I tell you—deserted! You get on a car and go to town. Notify the police—or, better still, take a walk around, yourself, and see what trace you can find. If they have left town, wire the police at different points on all the railroads. I want those men brought back!" and the Colonel brought his right fist down on the palm of his left hand with an emphasis that meant war for somebody.

Captain Blake made his way to the office, left a few notes for the sergeant major, ate a hasty breakfast at his quarters, told his wife not to expect him home for luncheon and in half an

hour was on his way to Graham City in civilian clothes.

Six months before, Captain Blake, the post adjutant, busy at his desk and surrounded by papers, received a call from a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, who strode into the sanctum unannounced. The caller glanced around the office with careless curiosity, and with the glance addressed himself to Blake.

"I—er—beg your pardon—but is this Captain Blake?"

Blake, being busy, did not consider it necessary to look up, a habit he had acquired from numerous interruptions. He said curtly, "Well, what is it?" and went on with his work.

The young man raised his eyebrows quizzically, and hesitating slightly, as if to study his man before replying, said more crisply than apologetically:

"If Captain Blake is busy"—and then with an electric charge that made Blake straighten up—"perhaps he will be so good as to appoint a time when I may ask him a few questions."

Blake, half rising, began: "I beg your pardon."

"Don't," said the young fellow softly; "I should beg yours—should not really have interrupted you. Pray, don't let me disturb you."

"These papers can wait," said the adjutant. "Do be seated," indicating a chair.

"Thank you," said the young fellow, seating himself composedly. "Allow me to offer you one of these cigars. You will find them first class—my own importation. Last I'll get for some time, I imagine." Then, as he saw a questioning look go over the adjutant's face, he added: "The—er—stock has run out."

Blake mechanically accepted the proffered cigar with an inward consciousness that he would have accepted dynamite in the same way if the chap had offered it, a feeling that he could neither explain nor shake off.

"The facts are these," continued the visitor easily: "I—a young friend of

mine, that is—has threatened to enlist in the army. I have every reason to believe that he will make good his threat and apply at this post."

The young man paused, as though expecting the adjutant to say something, but that gentleman was too busy trying to analyze the new sensation of finding himself, through some inexplicable reason, not exactly the master of the situation, and said nothing. The visitor went on:

"I am more or less interested in this youth, who, report says, is a bit wayward, and, while I personally have every confidence in him, there are others who haven't. Do you see?"

Blake nodded.

"Now for various reasons the aforesaid wayward youth wants to fade away—obliterate himself, as it were. He wants to sink so far out of sight that even a bill collector couldn't find him—but nothing dishonest, you understand. I'll guarantee that; just wants to efface himself, and give the rest of the world a chance to live on for a while without being crowded."

Again Blake nodded.

"Now, the army looks good to him. He's a good rider, and if it's possible to make a youth of this kind into a cavalry soldier, he'd try, I think, to do all the stunts desired by the powers that be, or try to be."

With an effort Blake pulled himself together. He had a conviction that this easy chap, puffing away at a fine Carolina, had a touch of ridicule in his voice. He felt instinctively that he himself primarily, the service secondarily and the entire universe tertiary were regarded by this young man as a joke that somebody had foolishly attempted to perpetrate without entire success. This was the only way out of his own feeling of inferiority with any solace to himself.

"I am not the recruiting officer," he finally vouchsafed in a disagreeable tone. "You will have to see Lieutenant Faulk." Touching an electric bell, he added curtly to an orderly who answered: "Show this gentleman to Lieutenant Faulk's office."

The young man raised his eyebrows, glanced at Blake with some surprise, at the orderly with interest, and then said in an amused tone that made Blake inwardly squirm:

"I thank you very much, Captain Blake. My informant evidently knew you when he said I would find you very approachable. Good day, sir."

Captain Blake finished his cigar, trying to detach the sting of the last words from the hearty and cordial tones which, in the presence of the orderly, had robbed them of all sarcasm.

A recruit named Degan was later assigned to D Troop. The name meant nothing to Blake, and the incident in his office was soon relegated to the limbo of things forgotten, though for a few hours it left him with the uncomfortable feeling of having been bested.

Three months later Captain Blake, being busy with other duties, delegated an officer to mount the guard. It was the custom to select two orderlies, one for the commanding officer and one for the adjutant. Shortly after guard mount a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow, in neat fitting olive-drab uniform, entered Blake's office and stood at attention. Blake, not taking the trouble to glance up, continued his work. The soldier stood waiting.

"Well, well, speak up! Report! What are you waiting for?" he asked sharply.

"I thought best not to disturb—"

Blake sat up, as though propelled by a steel spring. Before him stood his visitor of three months before. The right hand of the soldier came quickly to his hat.

"Sir, Private Degan, D Troop, 19th Cavalry, reports as orderly," he said in a respectful military tone, looking straight into the eyes of Captain Blake. He was unwavering and calm and gave no sign of recognition.

Blake mechanically returned the salute. Degan turned to the door and was almost out when Blake recovered himself.

"Orderly!" he called.

"Sir?" said Degan, fixing his military gaze upon the adjutant.

"Have you—are you—have you been on duty—as orderly—before?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know the duties required of you?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do you know them?"

"I have heard them discussed, sir."

"Discussed?"

"Yes, sir. They are not so intricate but that they can be easily grasped."

Blake glared at him suspiciously.

"No comments are necessary," he said. "Relieve the other orderly."

Blake spent an unpleasant day. Try as he would, the feeling first engendered by Degan could not be overcome: that instinctive feeling that Degan regarded the world in general and the adjutant in particular as absurdities that had to be tolerated; and this feeling grew until Blake found himself almost hating Degan.

Time had made matters worse. At the end of the three months the situation had become unique. Degan was a popular fellow in the post—on the officers' line as well as in the barracks. He pitched on the post team and had become the idol of the men. He could jump five horses in "monkey drill"; he had knocked out Donovan of the artillery, the post champion, at the indoor athletic meet; he had taken a first in every event he entered in the Fourth of July field day; the ladies called him handsome and "so gentlemanly," and Blake, soon after he discovered him as an enlisted man, heard that Captain Willis in command of D Troop was about to make him a corporal.

As for Degan, he appeared to receive all this adulation quite solemnly. Any attempt by certain of the officers to draw the man out of the soldier failed dismally and was quickly given up.

When coming in contact with Blake—and he appeared to seek such contact rather than to avoid it—Degan's manner was respectful in the extreme, but always with that subtle something

about him that annoyed Blake. This so wore upon Blake—Blake was all nerves, and took himself and the world with exaggerated seriousness—that he determined to rid Fort Graham of Degan if he ever got the chance. He considered the situation as a personal offense and one not to be tolerated. But Degan was considered a "good man" and, so far, was not to be caught napping.

II

BOREAUGH's Grand Limited Shows were giving a street parade as Blake swung off the electric car on the principal thoroughfare of Graham City, and the streets were crowded. Blake wended his way slowly through the crowd to the hotel, which was on a side street. He mounted the steps to the veranda and turned toward a swinging door that he imagined might lead to a bar. He was about to push it open, when it flew out violently, propelled from within, and with what seemed to Blake most unnecessary force. The door caught him unexpectedly. His hat flew in one direction and a circus program, which he had picked up, in the other.

Instinctively he groped for the nearest object, when a low, well modulated voice murmured: "Ah, I beg pardon, I beg pardon—allow me." His hat was returned to him with a sweeping Chesterfieldian bow, and Blake, straightening up, was staring into the deep blue eyes of Degan—Degan apparently intoxicated and dressed with all the elegance of a Fifth Avenue or Piccadilly clubman. As a matter of fact, there was no particular reason why Degan should not have been in that particular place at that particular time, and if the erstwhile adjutant of Fort Graham had been in a humor more conducive to mature thought he would have realized this fact. But Blake was far removed from the condition of mind that reasons soberly; he was at odds with himself and the world at large. Besides, at this particular juncture to be knocked over

the head by the one person in the world who had always succeeded in making him feel small in his own eyes was the very last straw.

And Degan's appearance! Civilian clothing of the most fashionable cut and of the best quality, from the Panama hat to the Oxford shoes; trousers turned up at the bottom, a tip of a colored silk handkerchief peeping from the breast pocket, and, yes—as he lived!—silk stockings the same shade as the handkerchief border and necktie! It was too much for mortal man.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Blake in a tone that had scared the wits out of many a soldier, but which he had never before used to Degan.

Degan raised his eyebrows, started to speak, stopped, cocked his head slightly to one side and contemplated Captain Blake with an expression of mild interest.

"Do you hear?" Blake ground the words out. "I asked you what you are doing here!"

A peculiar look flashed for an instant into Degan's eyes; then the quizzical curve to the eyebrows went up again.

"Doing?" he inquired politely, and then glanced about, as if possibly the remark had been addressed to someone else.

"Pay attention here"—Blake's jawbones were nearly under the lobes of ears, so tightly were his jaws pressed—"when I speak!"

"Beg pardon. 'S you speaking to me, sir?" Degan was kindly attentive, having apparently satisfied himself that he was the person addressed.

"You know very well I am speaking to you. You are—".

"Thash ver' funny"—Degan looked puzzled—"ver' funny. What name d'you say? You'll pardon me, won' you, 'f I don' seem t' r'member you."

"You know who I am well enough," growled Blake, yet half inclined to believe Degan; "and if you don't, you will soon find out. You are under arrest. Do you understand?"

Degan's face took on an expression of deep sorrow. "Poor fel!" he mur-

mured, as if to himself. "Shay, ol' man, lesh go inside and talk it over. Maybe you can get straightened out. I—"

"I tell you you are under arrest!" thundered Blake. "I am Captain Blake, and you know the—"

"Cap'n Blake?" Degan looked interested again. "Cap'n Blake? Don't think you've ev' been in'duced t' me—Cap'n Blake. Shorry—"

"Do you hear me?" roared Blake. "You are a prisoner. Step out here—"

"Don't talk cross! 'S all right. Only don lesh angry passions rise. Theesh people think you mad a' me," and Degan waved his hand in drunken dignity toward two or three hangers-on of the bar, who had been attracted to the scene.

What Captain Blake's reply to this admonition would have been cannot be recorded, for at this point the door of a saloon opposite was thrown open, and with ribald shouts and laughter a crowd of soldiers came piling into the street, carrying on their shoulders a young Irish recruit, whom Blake recognized as one he had disciplined many times. Amid shouts and yells the recruit was deposited in the middle of the street.

"Give it to us again, Shorty!"

"Do the Blake stunt!"

"Turn loose, old sport!"

"March us up to the next place!"

These remarks came to Blake's ears, as he stood helplessly contemplating the scene, partly screened from view by one of the veranda posts, and Degan momentarily forgotten.

"My recruits, as I live!" he muttered.

The Irish recruit called "Shorty" struck an attitude and held up one hand.

"Fall in!" he bawled. "And more lively!" With a shout of mirth the order was obeyed. A tall recruit took the lead and a lockstep chain was formed—one recruit behind the other with his hands on the shoulder of the man in front.

"Move out, you young man. Your days of lagging are over," commanded

Shorty, in tones so like Blake's own that even Blake himself recognized them.

"Yes, sir," came a trembling response from the "young man" addressed, followed by the shout of glee again.

The column formed; Shorty called attention—there were at least forty men in the ranks—delivered himself of a few of Blake's pet expressions in Blake's voice, and then commanded: "Forward, march!"

"Hip, hip — one — two — three — four—" Shorty cautioned until all were in step; then, turning, he began to beat time with his hand in unison with the movement of the left foot, which the entire column planted with a stamp, accompanied by the recital in unison of a bit of doggerel evidently arranged for the occasion:

"Blake, Blake—
We all of us know he's a fake;

Blake, Blake—

We've had all the skinning we'll take;
Blake, Blake—

and, repeating this over and over, the cavalcade wheeled into another saloon about a block away.

Captain Blake turned a white face to Degan, who had been looking on solemnly.

"There, damn you," he said, "that's the thing that is possible in these days of—worthless— See here, Degan!" Another tack struck Blake as possibly more prolific of immediate results. "I came down here today after those recruits. The Colonel thinks they are going to desert. I must take them back or turn them over to the police until I can get a guard from the post. If you want to save yourself from a general court-martial, follow me."

The corners of Degan's mouth came down slightly, and a sort of well-if-you-will-have-it look flashed across his face.

"Fol' you, d'you shay?" he replied, again cocking his head slightly and squinting one eye. "That sounds all right, but you shee, ol' chap, 's I shed before, b'lieve I never been in'tduced t'you an—"

"Shut up, and do as I say! Those men are deserters, I tell you, and if you want to save yourself about two years at Leavenworth, you'd better step out lively."

"D'serters! Oh—ah—thash it, eh? D'serters! Why din' shay sho b'fore? Shure thing. Come along!" Degan's athletic right arm was suddenly entwined in Blake's, and he lurched down the veranda steps, dragging the struggling adjutant with him.

"Drop it! Drop it, I tell you!" Blake sputtered. "What the devil do you mean?" and he wrenched his arm from the offending hold of his impetuous companion.

The column of absconding recruits issued forth to the street again at this juncture. Blake noted with satisfaction that they were within a block of the central fire and police station, and his lips tightened to a thin line as derisive laughter came floating back to him.

Degan confidentially took the Captain's arm again and now appeared in delirious haste to overtake the culprits. Within half a block of the police station the column turned into another saloon, and Blake grasped the opportunity, deciding to give Degan no chance to warn the offenders nor to make good his own escape.

As he neared the saloon he called a small boy, who was standing by, and bade him run to the station house and fetch a policeman. The urchin, hoping to see some excitement, was about to set off, when he was suddenly lifted bodily in a strong right arm, and Degan was expostulating with the Captain in a sad and hurt tone.

"P'lliceman! O-oh, don' you do it! Don' you do it! You don' know what you're doing. Guard house 's ver' bad place. You're young, m' fren', and pretty soon'll be shorry—shorry. 'Low me to give—"

"Drop that boy!" shouted Blake. "I've had quite enough from you for one afternoon. Let that boy go!"

"All ri'—if you mus'. But, 'member, I warned you. But lil' boy

mus'n't go t' police station; I'll go, I'll go," and before Blake could realize his intent, Degan had dropped the youngster in a heap on the ground and was striding rapidly and with suspiciously firm steps toward the police station. There was certainly no evidence of intoxication in his walk.

Blake's first impulse was to follow, but, as Degan was headed for the right place, he thought better of it and decided, instead, to keep watch on the recruits. Degan entered the station and soon reappeared with two bluecoats.

They paused on the pavement, and Degan seemed to be explaining the affair. The policemen, finally appearing to grasp the situation, nodded to Degan and bore down on Blake at a rapid stride, Degan strolling leisurely behind. Captain Blake was too impatient to note anything peculiar in this, and waved his hand toward the saloon as the policemen came near.

"In there, officer," he said impatiently.

"No, ye don't!" spoke the foremost of Graham City's "finest." "Ye don't go that on me. Think I look easy? Come along wid me!"

"Who are you talking to?" Blake demanded, the situation yet being too inconceivable for him to realize it.

"Who am I talking to, is it? An' who would I be talking to? D'ye think ye'r' Teddy Roosevelt or the Prince of Pilsen?"

Degan in the meantime had approached and stood watching with his saddest expression. Blake turned his blazing eyes toward him.

"This is your work! If—"

"Oh, I knew you would be sorry. I told you not to do it. You see, Mr. Officer, this is really a very good man. I tried my best to 'void this, but 'twas the only way I could handle the situation. Please be kind to him. Th' others are inside. They're only absent 'thout leave, but you'd better lock 'em up and telephone th' post. This one is the only deserter—fifty dollars reward for this one. I mus' catch this train or I'd telephone out. You jus' shay you got your instructions from

me when you telephone. Good-bye, ol' fel'!"

Both the policemen touched their caps as Degan walked slowly away, glancing back sadly once or twice at the petrified Blake, who stood staring at him too dumfounded to speak.

"Yes, sir; very good, sir. Many thanks to you, sir, and a pleasant trip."

"Good day to ye, sir," and the two policemen smiled at each other.

"Got something of a jag," said one of them, "but he sure is a gentleman."

"He is that," said the other. "'Twill be a good day's work if we git the fifty in addition. I didn't know the officers at the post were as flush as that."

Blake, with the fury of a wounded bull, suddenly made a leap after Degan.

"No, ye don't!" muttered one of the policemen, bringing the army officer up with a jerk.

Degan halted and looked back with a "Be good to him, Mr. Officer," and then his graceful stride was lost to view around the corner.

Amid expostulations, gesticulations and curses mild and curses strong Blake was compelled to go to the police station. His demands for the chief or some officer of the force were in vain. They had all gone to the circus. They would call the post all in good time. In the meantime Captain Blake—and the good-natured policemen laughed over the "Captain"—would have to remain there. He was deposited none too gently behind the bars of a cell.

III

THE commanding officer at Fort Graham sat placidly enjoying his dinner. His anger of the morning had disappeared, and he wondered vaguely what had become of his adjutant. A ring of the bell, answered by Saki, the Colonel's prize Jap, admitted an orderly. The Colonel leaned back in his chair, which enabled him to get a view of the door and inquired what was the matter.

"Telephone, sir," replied the soldier with a salute. "Police headquarters."

"Huh," grunted the Colonel with a frown. "Some circus day spree. Orderly!"

"Yes, sir."

"Say to call me up again in half an hour; I am at dinner."

The soldier saluted and returned to the telephone.

The Colonel finished his repast at leisure, selected his cigar with infinite care, searched his pockets for a match, passed a few facetious remarks with his wife and sauntered along to his office. He inquired of the sergeant major for news of Captain Blake, but none had been received. He then directed that police headquarters be called up on the telephone. He took the receiver and asked who wanted the commanding officer at Fort Graham.

"Yes—this is he."

"Eh—what? Good for you!"

"All right. I will send a guard right down. What?"

"What is the matter with him?"

"Thinks he's— Huh! He does, does he? Well, bring him out if you wish, and— How do you know he is a deserter?"

"Oh, well, that settles it, of course. Yes—fifty dollars. We will fix it up here. How many did you say were in that other crowd? Thirty-seven? Whew! All right. Yes, right away. Good-bye."

He turned away from the telephone and called, "Sergeant Major!"

"Yes, sir."

"Detail twenty men and three non-commissioned officers to go to town, mounted, at once, to bring up thirty-seven recruits turned over to the police by Captain Blake. Seems they *were* on a drunk, after all," he added to himself. "But there are yet twenty to be accounted for—nineteen, counting the one who is posing as an officer. Huh! Blake must have nailed him red-handed. Wonder where the devil Blake is anyway?"

He pushed the button for the orderly.

"Go to Captain Blake's house and ask if the Captain has returned. Then my compliments to the officer of the day and ask him to report to me at once."

Captain Blake had not returned. Mrs. Blake thought he might be at the office; she had heard nothing. The officer of the day having been given his instructions, the Colonel settled back to await developments. His second cigar was half smoked when a slight commotion in the hall was followed by the bursting open of the office door and the entrance of Captain Blake with a policeman at his heels.

"There!" he frothed. "Make your explanations now, you numskull! Don't talk to me! I don't want to hear your voice again."

"What the devil—" began the Colonel. "What does this mean, Blake?"

"Mean?" snarled the adjutant, his sense of respect for his superior officer entirely obliterated by the sense of his wrongs. "It means, sir, that I have been arrested, arrested as a deserter, and that these idiots—these—these—"

Blake's vocabulary was insufficient. By dint of questioning and cross-questioning the whole miserable business was finally made clear—through heavy haze—to the befuddled Colonel, who looked, or tried to look, sorrowfully at Blake and murmur sympathetically, "Well—well—"

"Ye see, sor, all the force was at the circus, an' no man knew Captain Blake, an' whin they cum back they didn't think—"

"That will do, Officer," broke in the Colonel. "We will take that matter up with the authorities. You may go."

"But, Colonel," cried Blake, "there's Degan. He may not have gone. This man knows him. He—"

"That will do, Blake. I will take care of this now. Degan is—gone," returned the Colonel, motioning the policeman toward the door.

The policeman having vanished, the Colonel turned to Captain Blake, gazing

at him reflectively. He relighted his cigar silently. A slight twitching of the mouth may have been a suppressed smile or some other emotion.

"Degan," he began slowly, "was discharged this morning by peremptory telegraphic orders from the War Department. The telegram is on your desk, I presume. His right name is Farthing, son of old H. C., President of the B. R. & L.—but you know about him well enough. There was a family row, or a row between the old man and the son, whose first name is Curtis. The boy wrote to his valet for something he wanted at home and—well, this is the result. The valet arrived this morning with a trunk full of clothes and money enough for present needs. The boy left two hundred dollars with Captain Willis to give D Troop a dinner and went away about noon. He probably was—celebrating some."

Two days later the mail brought the following letter addressed to Captain Francis C. Blake, Fort Graham:

DEAR SIR:

At the request of Mr. Degan, late private, D Troop, 19th Cavalry, the undersigned begs to extend to you the deepest sympathy for the unfortunate position in which circumstances forced the placing of you yesterday afternoon. I feel that, had Degan's brain been a little clearer, he might have devised some means to handle the situation that would have been more satisfactory all around. He begs that you will accept his apologies, and also that you will excuse the abrupt way in which he took his departure. He trusts you have fully recovered, however, from any inconvenience that you may have experienced, and asks me to tell you that he is leaving this part of the country never to return, and hopes you will forget the incident, as he has. He would consider it an honor if Captain Blake, at any time he may be in New York, would allow the undersigned an opportunity to extend the courtesies our mutual—and I hope soon to be forgotten—acquaintance, Degan seems to have neglected.

Very cordially yours,
CURTIS LEE FARTHING.
En Route, Graham City to New York.
October 12, 1908.

Captain Blake slowly replaced the letter in the envelope, his brows knit in thought.

THE VAMPIRE SUNRISE

By ROBERT RUDD WHITING

THE coroner said that it must have been the shock; that he had been fished out before he had time to drown. Besides, they found no water in his lungs.

No, he did not drown. And when the sun is high and shadows are short, I know that the coroner must be right; he died of the shock. But sometimes in the eerie gray of the early morning when I awake thinking about it, I wonder if, perhaps, it really could have been—something else.

I first saw him in the back room of a little West Side saloon. I had been over in Jersey, and stopped in on my way from the Christopher Street ferry to get a bite to eat. He was sitting in a corner, with his elbows on the table, staring vacantly at the half-emptied glass in front of him.

"Peach of a sunset tonight," I remarked cheerfully to the bartender who brought my beer and sandwich.

"Sure thing. The streets run due west here, and we get 'em good. If half of these guys who waste their sleep gettin' up to see sunrises—"

Crash!

The man in the corner had knocked his glass on the floor.

"I—I'm sorry," he stammered confusedly. "Yes, bring me another.

"Ugh!" he shuddered when the bartender had gone. "I hate sunrises!"

The terror in his voice was unmistakable. I looked at him in astonishment. He was tall and emaciated. His features were regular, but his white face was drawn and heavily lined, and his dull, brown eyes had a wild expression—no, not that, rather an expression of hopeless fear.

"Won't you have your things brought over here?" he invited diffidently. "I—er—I should be very glad of company." He was almost handsome when he smiled. I fear I had been staring at him.

How he came to bare his very soul before me, a man he had never seen before, I do not know. I remember that at times he seemed to be talking less to me than out of himself. That I was there was incidental.

I will not attempt to describe his anguish, his shrinking fear, his utter despair. I will merely set down his story as I heard it from him that night; as I have so often heard it in my dreams since then; as I have heard it when I awaken in the early morning, when the sun is low and the shadows are long. Here it is:

The first time was down in the Blue Ridge Mountains. It was a house party. The girl I loved was there. Tom—the other man—was there. Early one morning we were awakened by our host pounding on the doors. "Get down as quickly as you can—the house is on fire," he told us with intense calm. The servants were working with buckets and a garden hose, trying to keep the fire from the stairs. We gathered on the lawn, a motley group, chattering with nervous cheerfulness.

"Good God!" the other man suddenly gasped. "Where's Belle?" He had discovered that *she* was missing. We rushed back into the house. The stairs had caught. Some of the servants came with a ladder and placed it against her window. I was up it like

a cat. As I placed my hands on the sill I felt a sudden sinking sensation. The smoke was pouring out now, but it was not that. Something seemed to be sapping the very soul out of me. I turned away for an instant to take a fresh breath. A bit of fiery red was peeping up over the mountains in the east—the sunrise. It held me fascinated. My knees were giving way. And then—"You damned coward!" The other man swept me fainting off the ladder and plunged into the smoke-laden room himself. When I recovered consciousness the sun was clear of the tree tops.

Hurt? No. Would to heaven it had killed me! "And she—" was my first question. She was safe, they said. "Small thanks to you," they very plainly kept from saying. The women were coldly polite. The men—men are kinder—frankly shunned me. I left without seeing her.

Even after my return North the thing pursued me. The men I had known seemed to act differently toward me. This was purely imagination, I tried to persuade myself. I would prove it, just to satisfy myself.

"By the way," I remarked to a man in one of my clubs, "I saw some friends of yours when I was South. Quite a fire we had down there. Did you hear about it?"

He looked me squarely in the eyes. "Yes," he said, very distinctly, "I heard about it." He turned his back on me and walked away.

That night I got drunk. The next day I engaged passage for Paris.

Paris! I threw myself recklessly into the midst of it. Theaters, the races, suppers, more suppers—and when I tired, for the time, of these, I could sit at a table in front of some boulevard café and watch the people go by. Glad people, sad people, good people, bad people—people, people, people—hundreds and thousands of people—all day long—and there was not one of them who knew! Not one of them who had heard!

I was almost happy. There were times when I nearly forgot. And then

came that Fourteenth of July. Have you ever been in Paris on their great national holiday? Ah, then you know—the bands and everything. I spent the night in the Place de l'Opera, singing, marching, cake walking and dancing with hundreds of old, old friends whom I had never seen before in all my life. We *vive-ed la France* and *à-bas-ed la Prusse*. Just as the band was playing the final "Marseillaise," a *fiacre* containing three drunken Americans galloped by. "Come on, come on—everybody!" they shouted, waving wildly. We dashed after them. A little Frenchman and myself landed sprawling in the bottom of the *fiacre*. The Americans joyously dragged us up, and we all bellowed "La Machiche" while the *cocher* plied his whip.

Where we were going I did not know. At first I did not care. Then came the reaction. Our singing and shouting became less and less spontaneous. Pale streaks of light appeared in the sky ahead of us. I glanced at my companions. How sodden and pasty they looked! One of them, chin on chest, was sleeping heavily. I looked to see where we were. How many dull, gray buildings there are in Paris! I had never noticed it before. In the light of the brightening dawn it all seemed sordid, filthy—tarnished tinsel. A wave of disgust surged through me. I felt faint and weak. "Wake up, wake up!" I was vaguely conscious of one of my companions shaking me. A fierce, brazen fire blazed in the sky ahead of us. The sun was rising. Ugh! How I hated Paris!

When I came to, the sun was streaming into my room. They must have discovered the name of my hotel from letters in my pocket. "Nervous breakdown," the doctor sagely told me. I must avoid all excitement and stimulants. Absolute rest. Leave Paris at once. Some quiet spot in Switzerland would be good.

I spent the next two months at a little place on the way up to the Engadine, where they have soothing hot mineral baths, with a physician in charge, who gravely advises his pa-

tients each day to "continue the baths."

I gradually walked, rode and bathed my way back to strength of mind and body. At the end of a month I no longer dreaded to go to sleep for fear of the dreams it would bring me. I grew to have something of that love for the great, silent, protecting mountains that makes mountain people feel lonesome and lost in flat lands.

Then came the doctor's annual party—a delicate form of rebate to those of his patients who had "continued the baths" most liberally.

Have you ever been to a party in German Switzerland? We ate rich food and drank sweet wines until we could eat and drink no more. Then we danced and romped until we were hungry again. Again we ate and drank. Again we danced. How long we kept it up I do not know. And then, while the violins were scraping out "Wiener Blut," a little group who were standing by the open French windows suddenly pointed to the sky. "*Die Sonne geht auf!*" they exclaimed in ecstasy. "See—the sunrise!"

The dancers stopped and crowded to the windows. I hesitated. Something warned me. Then, drawn by some strange influence, I slowly joined the others. The sky was streaked with great splashes of violet, mauve and purple.

"Isn't it gorgeous!" rapturously exclaimed a woman whom an hour before I had thought the most beautiful creature in the world. For the first time I noticed a tiny mole upon her neck. I dislike moles exceedingly. I glanced at the sky again. Close to the horizon the violets and purples had given place to wonderful golds and rose tints. I felt my vitality withering under its brilliant glare. My knees grew weak. My heart was throbbing, throbbing wildly—like an engine from which the resistance has been removed. I turned to the people about me. How ghastly they all looked! The men seemed sallow and unhealthy. The wrinkles in the women's necks had cut little lines through the powder.

"Look, look! There it is!"

I looked. A blinding disk of fire was shooting up from behind the menacing, ogrelike mountains. I gazed at it, fascinated. And then everything became dark.

God, how I hated Switzerland with its great, overpowering scenery! Scenery? What is scenery but some awful blemish on the face of the earth? This was worse than Paris, with its dull, ashen drab showing through the scratches on its tawdry veneer of gaiety. I dreaded to try anew. Better the scorn of my friends at home, I felt. Among New York's four millions there must be hundreds and hundreds of thousands none of whom those who knew me had ever even seen. I would become one of those hundreds and hundreds of thousands.

I did find New York better—until last night. Last night I spent in drinking. I was afraid to go to bed. I wandered over to Madison Square and seated myself upon a bench to wait for daylight. With my arm stretched along the back of the seat and my forehead resting on my arm, I fell into a doze. When I looked up again, Twenty-fourth Street, somewhere beyond the Third Avenue elevated structure, seemed one solid mass of flame.

A fire! I scrambled to my feet. Then, limp and faint, I sank back upon the bench. I was weak from lack of sleep, I told myself. My glance wandered over the towering buildings silhouetted against the brightening sky. They oppressed me. Great, gaunt weeds, I pictured them, reaching up out of the stifling mire in which they grew for air and sunlight. The thought suffocated me. I turned my eyes back to the flaring blaze at the foot of the street. It was higher; it was more intense; and then, with a shudder, I realized that it was not a fire at all—it was the sunrise.

I tried to turn away, but I could not. My strength was oozing from me; something was slowly sapping—sapping the red out of my blood, sapping the life out of my body. And then, as

I sat there in Madison Square, dumbly gazing at the rising sun, I suddenly understood. That awful first time when it swept me from the ladder, then in Paris, again in Switzerland—I suddenly understood.

Do you know at what time of the day vitality is lowest? At what time strong men become weak, and weak men cease to be? Do you know when it is that sick men who have rallied relapse and pass out—when bright minds become morbid—when poor, weak unfortunates give up their little remaining hope and seek to end it all with suicide? It—is—just—before—sunrise!

My companion leaned across the table. His fearful, staring eyes showed white above the iris.

"The rising sun is a vampire!" he almost hissed. "It sucks up its brightness and warmth and life from the earth and all the creatures on the earth, leaving everything that it touches ashen, cold, dead. The rising sun—God! Oh, God, how I dread it!"

He buried his head in his arms and sobbed convulsively.

It was late that night, or early next morning, possibly, when I reached my rooms. I had not been in bed long when the telephone rang. My second cousin, I was told, crossing Broadway after a late supper, had slipped in front of an automobile and was now in Bellevue Hospital. He had named me as his nearest relative. Nearest in point of location, I suppose he meant, for I lived on Twenty-fourth Street, just east of Fourth Avenue. He had a maiden aunt on Riverside Drive.

I dragged on my clothes and plodded over to the hospital. After much inquiry and a great deal of delay, I learned that he was not seriously hurt and was resting comfortably. I remember wondering at the time if they had dressed his injuries with red tape:

but that was probably because I was in ill humor at being dragged out of bed, and unused to the ways of hospitals generally.

By the time I left, the night was already diluted with dawn. I walked down First Avenue and turned into Twenty-fourth Street. A man was striding briskly toward me. His footsteps sounded loud and hollow on the deserted pavement. Perhaps he, too, had a distant cousin in the hospital, I thought bitterly. There was something familiar in that tall, wasted figure, in that drawn, haggard face. When he was quite near I suddenly recognized him—my weird companion of the evening before. As he passed I started to speak to him, but he did not see me; he was staring straight ahead, toward the river. I walked on, unaccountably depressed. All at once it flashed through my brain. He was walking east!

I turned and crossed the avenue after him. At the corner I paused. What could I say to him? He would take me for a meddling fool. Then, in the open space between the gray board fence of the city pipe yards and the shed at the foot of the street, I caught a tiny glint of blazing light. He saw it, too, and quickened his pace. I called to him. At the sound of my voice he broke into a run. I tore after him, shouting. The open space ahead of us was now ablaze with golden sunlight. As he ran he flung his arms out in front of him, supplicatingly. I gained upon him. At the water's edge I was almost up with him. I clutched at him, but as I did so the glaring light caught me full in the eyes. For the instant it blinded me.

He went down into the golden river with his arms still outstretched toward the golden sun.

A policeman helped me drag him out. He was dead. Shock, perhaps; at least, they found no water in his lungs.



A MATRIMONIAL AGENT

By ARTHUR R. JONES

“I WANT to speak to you, Uncle Bob,” said Muriel Tremayne. It was, of course, conceivable that there might have been eight other words in the English language capable of forming a sentence which Colonel Tremayne would have equally disliked to hear, but, if any such combination were possible, Muriel, his niece and ward, had not, during the year and a half she had been an inmate of his little house in Bolton Street, lighted on it; and she was possessed of no mean talent for giving utterance to sayings that were not always particularly grateful to his ear. In the first place, he disliked being called “Uncle Bob,” although he frequently had to submit to it, as that mode of address always struck him as somewhat lacking in respect on Muriel’s part, and as inconsistent with his own dignity, both as the head of the august Tremayne family, and as a colonel (retired) in His Majesty’s army. Secondly, he deemed it superfluous of her to say that she wanted to speak to him, when she was already doing so. And, thirdly, he had learned by past experience to dread that particular formula, as it almost invariably preceded an intimation that she had got into some quandary, usually in connection with one of her numerous admirers, to extricate her from which she was about to invoke his aid.

Muriel Tremayne was a very lovely girl, and her uncle was very fond of her. But, as he often ruefully had reason to observe, many other men not bound to her by ties of kinship were also fond of her; and this fact

was by no means conducive to his peace of mind. He was a bachelor and admitted to himself in moments of confidence that he was approaching middle age. To be strictly accurate—which is always unpleasant in the matter of a person’s age—he was fifty-eight years old. He loved his club, and the “sweet, shady side of Pall Mall,” and his two chief interests in life were the iniquities of the War Office and the fortunes of the Conservative party. Fond as he was of his niece, he sometimes felt justifiably aggrieved at the disturbing element she introduced into his carefully ordered life. He could not avoid reflecting at times that Fate has served him a sorry trick in confiding to his guardianship a young lady of twenty, possessed of a wealth of golden hair, a pink and white complexion, babyish, innocent-looking blue eyes and an inordinate propensity for the gentle art of flirtation, whose mission in life appeared to be to act the part of a magnet to the various men of all ages, from seventeen to seventy, of her acquaintance.

“Well?” he replied not very graciously, and conscious that the reverse would have been a response more in consonance with his prevision of what was coming.

“To tell the truth, I want your advice,” she continued. Now, it is sometimes gratifying to one’s self-esteem to have one’s advice sought, but it was not Muriel’s way, as her uncle well knew, to ask for it until she found herself landed in some predicament in which mere *advice*, unaccompanied by some more sub-

stantial aid, was powerless to help her.

"I suppose, by that expression, you intend to convey the idea that you want to consult me as to the propriety of locking the door of some stable from which the steed has already been stolen."

"Oh, Uncle Bob, how can you be so nasty? I really am in a bit of a fix."

"You don't say so!" in a tone of elaborate and assumed astonishment.

Muriel nodded. "Yes; Major Frobisher proposed to me at the Mauleverers' dance last night."

"Yes?" said Colonel Tremayne interrogatively. There was nothing particularly surprising in that announcement. Men, for some reason or other, were constantly proposing to Muriel.

"And I accepted him."

"Indeed! Then it is my congratulations, rather than my advice, for which you are asking. You can certainly have them. I have the highest opinion of Frobisher. He is a man of good position, good means and good principles."

"He is as old as Methuselah," said the girl with utter irrelevance and complete disregard of truth, as it seemed to her uncle, who reflected that Major Frobisher was his junior by fifteen years.

"At all events," he replied, "he can, in the nature of things, be only a few hours older than he was last night, when your acceptance of his proposal made him, as no doubt it did, the happiest of men."

"And he is so horribly bald!" Muriel was really more tactless than usual, thought her uncle. His own hair was getting thin at the crown. But perhaps, after all, that was not so noticeable as he had feared it was. In fact, on second thought, it could not be, or she would never have referred in terms of disgust to Major Frobisher's baldness.

"But, I imagine," he observed, "that there is no reason to suppose that he is appreciably balder today than he was a few hours ago, when

his lack of hair apparently proved no obstacle to his suit."

"Anyhow, he seems older and balder than he did when I accepted him. It is like this, Uncle Bob—well, Uncle Robert, then, if you like that better: shortly after I had said 'Yes' to Major Frobisher, I had another proposal from Captain Gower."

"You did not, I presume, promise to make Gower's future life also a dream of bliss?" inquired Colonel Tremayne, by no means sure that this sarcastic suggestion did not hit the right nail on the head. Muriel actually had, on a former occasion, contrived to engage herself to two different admirers on one and the same evening, and had only got out of that delicate and difficult position by breaking it off with them both the next day.

"Oh, no, nothing like that, though I am not sure that I am not in rather a worse fix than that."

"I should scarcely think that possible," commented her uncle drily.

"Oh, yes, it is," replied Muriel. "In that case, all I should have to do, to put everything right, would be to give one of them his *congé*."

"Oh, would that be all?" inquired Colonel Tremayne with unheeded irony.

"Yes, that would be the simplest thing in the world. But my difficulty at present is that I refused Captain Gower. You see," she went on to explain, "it was only half an hour after I had accepted Major Frobisher, and I suppose I must have lost my presence of mind, or something. But if I had known that he was going to propose, I should never have accepted Major Frobisher. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I think so. It is Gower's proposal that has in such a surprisingly short time added to Frobisher's age the years which, it is comforting to know, are said to bring the philosophic mind and diminished the number of the hairs of his literally devoted head."

"That is exactly it. How nice and sympathetic you can be when you like, Uncle Bob! And it is about that that I want your advice."

"Then my advice to you is easily

given. It is to forget all about Gower's having proposed, and then Frobisher will renew his youth like the eagle, and the hairs of his head will seem as the sand on the seashore for multitude."

"Ah, but that's just what I can't do," said Muriel softly. "And it is just here that I should be glad of your advice, or, perhaps I ought to say, your help."

"I thought that perhaps it was my help and not my advice of which you stood in need. It generally is."

"They are both much the same thing, after all," she replied with a smile. "Major Frobisher is coming here at twelve o'clock this morning to ask your approval, and I thought very likely you might be able to help me."

"In what way, may I ask?" inquired Colonel Tremayne rather grimly. He had a fairly shrewd idea of the part his niece destined him to play.

"I thought perhaps, Uncle Bob," replied Muriel coaxingly, "you wouldn't mind just telling him that you were perfectly horrified at the idea of my marrying a man of his age, and utterly refused to countenance it. You might say I was heartbroken, if you liked," she added with a realistic touch that did credit to her sense of histrionic fitness.

"In other words, you wish me to appear in the role of the ogre uncle, the stony-hearted guardian, and forbid the union of two loving hearts on the ground of the disparity of age between you, and also of his baldness, for I suppose I musn't forget to allege that as an additional reason for the attitude you wish me to adopt."

"Oh, you will know exactly the right thing to say, so don't pretend to be dense. Do, please, do me this one small favor, and I will never ask you another as long as I live." Here Muriel's innocent-looking blue eyes, which were wont to work such havoc on the opposite sex, took on a pleading expression which her uncle found it hard to resist, but he nevertheless hardened his heart.

"No, Muriel, I decline to do anything of the kind," he said. "If you

choose to play fast and loose with a man in this way, the responsibility must rest on your shoulders." She gave the shapely shoulders in question a little shrug of mock despair. "I will explain to Frobisher, if you like, that you are a silly child, devoid both of sense and sensibility, and don't know your own mind for two minutes together, and I will ask him to release you; but I can do no more than that."

"Oh, Uncle Bob, thank you a thousand times! I don't mind what you say to him, as long as you get me out of it."

"Your kindly consideration for your fiancé—for I suppose Major Frobisher is entitled to that proud appellation until this interview takes place—does you infinite credit, my dear."

"Of course I am sorry for him—" began Muriel.

"I don't think *I* am, under the circumstances," interpolated Colonel Tremayne significantly.

"But then," pursued his niece complacently, "an old man like that shouldn't want to marry a girl of twenty—and he is *so* bald, too! Perhaps it would sound better if you said that I shall always look on him as an uncle," she added thoughtfully.

"I don't think, on the whole, that I will try to soften the blow in that way. He might be disposed to resent any well meant attempt of that kind at mitigation."

"Oh, well, you know best what another old—I mean what a man of Major Frobisher's age would feel like. And now, Uncle Bob, as you are going to be *so very* kind, there is just one other *tiny* favor I want to ask."

"But I thought," interposed Colonel Tremayne, "that you were never going to ask me another favor as long as you lived."

"I am not—till the next time. But what I want to ask you now is really part of the same one. I thought, if you only would, you could so easily just give Captain Gower a hint—"

"A hint about what?"

"Why, that I didn't know my own

mind with him, either," answered Muriel, blushing most becomingly.

"I suppose," said her uncle resignedly, "it is no good doing things by halves. If I am to help you at all in this *affaire de coeur*, as I will, for courtesy's sake, style your imbroglio, I may as well go the whole hog. I will telephone to Gower and ask him to dine with me at the club tonight, and I dare say I shall be able to give him what you are pleased to term a hint."

"Oh, you are a darling, Uncle Bob!" exclaimed Muriel, jumping up and running round to her uncle. "I really must give you a kiss."

"I don't think I should be too lavish with my kisses if I were you, my dear Muriel," said her uncle, as he accepted the proffered caress. "You will need them all for Frobisher—or Gower."

Colonel Tremayne did not particularly relish the role which had been thrust on him by his niece, and he relished it still less when, precisely as the clock struck twelve, Major Frobisher, with the punctuality which invariably characterized him, called to ask him for his niece's hand. Major Frobisher was always irreproachably dressed, but that morning he looked even more immaculately got up than usual. He appeared, too, to have assumed an air of sprightly juvenility which rendered the elder man all the more conscious of the difficulty of his task. "The fellow looks a bridegroom all over," thought the unhappy Colonel.

"My errand is no secret, I expect, Tremayne," he said, as they shook hands, with an air of confidence which made Colonel Tremayne both envious and fearful, "and, I venture to think, is not likely to be distasteful to you."

"The fact is, Muriel did say something about your meaning to call this morning," began the Colonel, getting red in the face.

"Ah, no doubt," interposed the other with easy assurance. "I shall hope to pay my respects to Muriel in a few minutes. Our interview need not take long, I think, Tremayne. You know my circumstances, and you know

me. As regards settlements, I should suggest settling—"

"Pray stop, Frobisher," interposed the Colonel hurriedly. This was even more awkward than he had anticipated. The man's air of confident triumph was most disconcerting. "I have one or two things to say to you. You see, Muriel is very young."

"Twenty-one next month, she informs me," replied Major Frobisher, who was evidently well posted.

"Just so, just so. Well, of course, that seems very young to men of our age."

"Men of whose age—yours or mine, Tremayne?" inquired Major Frobisher with polite interest.

"Oh, both," floundered the Colonel. "We were boys together, as one might say."

"It would be very erroneous to say so, then," interposed the other with pedantic accuracy. "When you arrived at manhood I was still in the nursery. You are certainly no longer a young man yourself, but I did not imagine—nor, I think, does Muriel—that I had forfeited all right to that title," he added, complacently stroking his mustache.

"Oh, no, certainly not," stammered the Colonel in confusion. "But, as I was saying, Muriel is very young, and girls of her age often say more than they mean."

"I trust I shall have no fault of that kind to find with Muriel," replied Major Frobisher, who was something of a prig, at a loss to make out what the elder man was driving at.

"Certainly not," replied the Colonel with some asperity. He did not at all appreciate the other's calm assumption that he had a right to find fault with a niece of his. "But, as a matter of fact, Muriel made a slight mistake last night when you did her the honor of asking her to marry you."

"Indeed—what was that?"

"Well, the fact is, she said 'Yes' when she meant to say 'No.'"

"That would certainly be what you euphemistically term 'a slight mistake' and 'saying more than she meant,'"

responded Major Frobisher, still ominously polite, "but I think you must be misinformed. Miss Tremayne certainly honored my proposal of marriage with a reply in the affirmative. But our conversation at the time, and subsequently, was not confined to a monosyllable, and it is inconceivable that I can have misapprehended her meaning last night."

Why the deuce, wondered the Colonel, should the fellow think it necessary to talk like a book? Muriel was right; he certainly was very old, even for his age, and he seemed more noticeably bald than usual.

"Anyhow, that is her meaning this morning," he blurted out hurriedly, conscious that in his confusion he was blundering worse and worse. "She feels that she has made a mistake and behaved deucedly badly and all that sort of thing, but, in short, she thinks it would never do. You see, she is very young—"

"So you have twice before informed me," interpolated the other in freezing tones.

"And, you see, you aren't very young—"

"That also you have been good enough to infer before."

"And, altogether, she wants to cry off," pursued the Colonel in sheer desperation. "And, upon my word, you can't blame her, you know."

"I am not aware that I have evinced any disposition to blame Miss Tremayne."

"No, of course not, of course not. You see she is very young, and you aren't very young, are you Frobisher? And I must say you have taken it very well, shown a lot of deuced good feeling and all that sort of thing. I knew you would look at it in the right light."

"And what, may I ask, do you consider the right light, Colonel Tremayne?" inquired Major Frobisher with an icy politeness that caused the Colonel, by this time at his wits' end, to shiver all down his back.

"Well, age, you know, and all that sort of thing," he stammered.

"You see Muriel is very young, and you—"

"I need not trouble you to recapitulate your statement as to my age, Colonel Tremayne. I have the honor to wish you good morning."

So Major Frobisher departed in high dudgeon, without "paying his respects to Muriel," as he had intended to do, and Muriel's uncle realized that his interposition on her behalf in the "office and affairs of love" had cost him a friend. He did not give a very minute account of his disagreeable interview to his niece at luncheon, as he had an uneasy suspicion that he had not borne his part in it with that *savoir faire* on which he was accustomed to pride himself. He contented himself with remarking that Major Frobisher had, very rightly, shown considerable annoyance at her disgracefully inconsiderate treatment of him.

"After all," observed Muriel musingly, "I don't know that he is so very old; and some people think a little baldness rather becoming than otherwise in a man."

"You did not appear to be one of those people this morning," said her uncle rather sharply. "However, I trust that you are certain of your own mind this time, for, if not, I shall be glad to know, as in that case there will be no necessity for me to give Gower the 'hint' you desired me to give him at dinner tonight."

"Oh, of course I am quite certain, Uncle Bob," replied Muriel reproachfully. "But I can't help feeling sorry for Major Frobisher—and of course he is awfully well off. I am going to Lady Stanton's dance tonight, but I shall be *fearfully* anxious to know how you have got on with Cecil—I mean," with a blush, "Captain Gower—so I shall manage to leave early. And mind you don't go to bed till I come back."

When Colonel Tremayne greeted his guest that evening at the Carlton Club he felt on much better terms with himself than he had done when he received Major Frobisher in the morn-

ing. For one thing, he strongly agreed with Lord Stowell's dictum that "a dinner lubricates business." And, for another thing, it is a far more grateful task to hint to a man that the object of his devotion is ready to requite his affection than it is to intimate to him that she wishes to retract her plighted word, on the score of his excessive years or scanty locks.

The dinner was admirable. The salmi of partridge—that dish was the Colonel's favorite entrée—was a veritable marvel of all that a salmi should be, and the champagne had tarried exactly the correct length of time in the ice pail. Cecil Gower's manner, too, was soothing to the feelings of the elder man. Without being in any way the manner of a young man to an old, the Colonel detected in it just that *soupon* of deference, which, he considered, a young man might rightly show to one who was beyond doubt some few years his senior.

Altogether, by the time they arrived at coffee and cigars, Colonel Tremayne felt very charitably disposed toward mankind in general, and desirous of taking a rose-colored view of everything and everybody. He was pleased with himself, pleased with Captain Gower, inclined to look on Muriel's delinquencies with a lenient eye, and not unwilling even to make tolerant allowance for Major Frobisher's chagrin of the morning. The moment seemed to him to be propitious for the "hint" he had promised to give.

"Do you care for poetry, Gower?" he inquired casually, after he had duly denounced Mr. Haldane's army scheme, though even his denunciation of that "absurdity," as he termed it, lacked its customary vigor, so benevolent was his mood.

"Yes, I do, Colonel, rather—in fact I am very fond of it," replied the young man, whose affection for the muse dated, oddly enough, from the time of his introduction to Muriel, since when, indeed, he had even gone so far as to try his hand at the com-

position of amorous, if halting, verse on his own account.

"Then you probably have read 'The Passionate Pilgrim'?"

Captain Gower shook his head.

"Ah, well, perhaps people don't read the poems of Shakespeare to the same extent as they do his plays. You have not then come across these lines:

"Have you not heard it said full oft,
A woman's nay doth stand for naught?"

I always think they are one proof of many that Shakespeare's knowledge of woman was at least fully equal to his knowledge of everything else in Heaven and earth and—well, the other place."

"I wish I could think so, in one particular instance," said the young man eagerly, hoping that he had found the reason for the Colonel's invitation to dinner, which, as a matter of fact, had somewhat surprised him.

"And why not, my boy?" asked the Colonel kindly. "To tell the truth, Muriel told me of her conversation with you yesterday. And, you see, she is very young, and girls of her age often say more than they mean." Here the Colonel checked himself. These words sounded oddly familiar, and he suddenly remembered that he had already given expression that day to similar sentiments. "But, if you take my advice, you will call tomorrow at Bolton Street, and I think I may say," he added with an arch smile, "that you will probably have every reason to be of my opinion with regard to the immortal William's omniscience."

The young man was overjoyed at the unexpected turn his love affair had taken. Only that morning a report had reached him that Muriel had accepted Major Frobisher, and he had suspected that the Colonel, in his kindness of heart, might have asked him to dinner with the idea of breaking the evil tidings to him gently. He was, naturally, profuse in his expressions of gratitude, and inquired with eagerness at what hour he should present himself at Bolton Street on the morrow.

"Twelve o'clock, I should think,"

replied his host. "Muriel will be in then, I feel sure." He regretted naming that time the moment he had done so, as he recalled the fact that Major Frobisher had called, by appointment, at twelve that very morning, and it savored of ill omen to fix the same hour for his rival to press his suit. "And you had better stay to lunch," he added, remembering that Major Frobisher had not stayed to lunch, so that history would not be precisely repeating itself.

Colonel Tremayne and his guest parted with feelings of mutual esteem and good will, and the former congratulated himself when he reached his domicile on having done a good evening's work. Men, he reflected, can manage little matters like that much better than women can, with all their vaunted tact. And after all, he thought Muriel was a very nice girl, a little wayward perhaps, but nothing more. She was very young, and one must make allowances for the precociousness of youth. And when she was married to Gower she would no doubt settle down.

"Women are very much like horses," he told himself. "The high-mettled ones are often a bit playful, without an ounce of vice." And anyhow, he mused, once married, she would be off his hands, and he would be free to devote his entire attention, without the distractions consequent on a girl's caprices, to matters of serious moment, such as the iniquities of the War Office and the fortunes of the Conservative party.

Colonel Tremayne kept his word and sat up for his niece, in order to impart his good news to her, but she was not equally mindful of her promise to return early, to learn how he had fared in his mission on her behalf. He smoked three cigars, and was just on the point of retiring to seek the repose which he felt he had fairly earned after his somewhat checkered day, when his niece whirled into the smoking room in all the bravery of her ballroom attire.

"It's all right!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, it's all right," returned her uncle with sympathetic glee, mistaking her exclamation for a query.

"He proposed tonight, and I accepted him."

"But I left him only three hours ago," exclaimed Colonel Tremayne in bewilderment. "Ah, I see," he added as light dawned on him, "I suppose he looked in at Lady Stanton's after I parted from him, and that is why you didn't leave early as you promised, you little tease. Well, well, I won't complain."

"Whom are you talking about?" she cried.

"Why Gower, of course."

"Oh, Captain Gower! I had forgotten all about him. I meant Ronald Harford."

"Ronald Harford!" ejaculated the Colonel. "Why, I never heard of him."

"Neither did I, till about a fortnight ago," replied his niece, adding, with a most becoming blush, the effect of which her unhappy uncle, almost bereft of speech and doubting whether he had heard aright, entirely failed to appreciate: "I believe it must have been a case of love at first sight on both sides."

"Ah, no doubt—and what is Mr. Ronald Harford, my dear?" he asked feebly. He rubbed his eyes, and pinched himself to see if he were awake. He seemed to be, but he must, he soliloquized, as a matter of fact, be dreaming.

"Oh, a barrister—one of the cleverest men at the bar," answered Muriel. Her uncle was now sure that he was awake, and was wondering whether it could be possible that, for the first time for thirty years, he had transgressed the limits of strict moderation at dinner. Of course that champagne had been so good that—but still, until Muriel came in, he could have sworn he was absolutely sober.

"Indeed! I don't seem to have heard of him as an eminent counsel," murmured the unhappy man. It must have been that infernal yellow Chartreuse, he reflected, for of course this

conversation could never be actually taking place.

"That is because he has never had a brief yet," explained his niece, "but, as soon as he gets one he will probably be made a judge quite soon."

"Probably a judge quite soon," echoed the Colonel, wishing that he, himself, were as sober as one, as then he would not suffer from the delusion that Muriel was talking all this nonsense.

"And he is coming to see you at twelve o'clock tomorrow," she continued, "to ask for your consent."

"At twelve o'clock tomorrow," repeated her uncle in a dazed fashion. "Yes, they all come then, don't they?"

An awful thought had struck him. He was convinced that he was neither drunk nor dreaming. He must be going mad.

"And I want you to be very nice to him," continued Muriel ingratiatingly. "And, Uncle Bob, I am *so* happy, and I must thank you *so much* for all you have done for me."

"Don't mention it, my dear. It's been a pleasure, I'm sure," feebly answered her uncle, as he got up to go to bed. "You see," he muttered to himself, deprived of all power of coherent thought, "Muriel is very young, and girls of her age often say more than they mean."



THE BRIDGE LIGHTS

By ARTHUR STRINGER

BLACK on the rain-swept harbor hung the night,
But through the darkness, lamp by valiant lamp,
We saw the spectral glow where ran the bridge,
From gloom-encompassed mainland on to dim
Imagined mainland even more remote.
The lordly bridge of granite and of steel
We could not see, but light by serried light
We knew it lived and arched the emptiness.

And so it is with each faint gleam that man
Has known and nursed. Companionship by its kind,
There, light by light, across the frustrate tides
And o'er the undeciphered gloom they swing.
The towers of granite and the paths of steel
Our eyes have not beheld; but still we know
That out from mainland unto mainland swings
And stands and waits some undiscovered bridge.

ON THE VELDT

By FREDERICK C. PATTERSON

CAST

HAWK FARRELL (*a scout employed by the British*)
LOUIS BRANDT (*an Outlander*)
META (*FARRELL's wife*)

PLACE: *A farm in South Africa, twenty miles from Ladysmith.*

TIME: *During the Boer War.*

SCENE—*A room at FARRELL'S. Rough, inexpensive furniture. Plaster walls. Guns, a hide or two, a deer head, etc., around the room. There is a table in the center, with a rocking chair at the right and a small kitchen chair to the left. A kitchen dresser stands at the left and other furniture appropriate. There are steps at the left, presumably running up to the loft. The outer door is at the right in the back wall, and at the left is a window.*

As the curtain rises, a clock upon the wall strikes four. META, who has been seated, sewing, in the rocker, glances up fearfully.

META

Four o'clock, and he said he'd be here at midnight. They've caught him this time, I know it. Oh, why couldn't he stay at home with me, instead of risking his life all the time for people who don't care whether he lives or dies, except that he does their dangerous work for them? There, I suppose I'm a coward and very selfish, but I need him so much more than they do—just now. Oh, Ted, Ted, I haven't told you yet, and you'll be so glad! I will try to be brave now for—for all our sakes. (*Laughs happily.*) Dear old boy, I must have something ready for him, for he'll probably want to rush away again as soon as he's had a mouthful to eat. He'll need some more shells, too, I suppose.

(*She goes to a rough settee box at the*

left and takes out a box of revolver cartridges.)

The wicked things! It's horrible to think of these little wretches tearing the life out of big, brave men. Oh, dear, I'm a poor wife for a soldier. Every little thing frightens me. What's that?

(*There is a slight noise at the window, and a man's face appears and disappears. META sees it and runs to the door, hesitates and retreats to the table, looking first at the window, then at the door.*)

It can't be Ted!

(*There comes an uncertain knock at the door.*)

Who is it? (*Weakly. A louder knock comes.*)

Co-come in.

(Enter LOUIS BRANDT, slightly drunk. He has a shamefaced expression which he endeavors to offset by bravado.)

META

Louis! How you startled me! I'm so glad it's you, though. What is it? Is there any trouble over yonder?

BRANDT (leaning with his back against the closed door)

Startled you, did I? I didn't mean to. (He looks at META through half-closed eyes.)

META

There is some trouble, and you've been drinking again. You wouldn't be here at this hour if something hadn't happened. Why don't you speak?

BRANDT

Oh, no; no trouble! They've set fire to the veldt around the house and burnt the place out. Pete's killed—so'd I be, on'y I 'us drunk.

META

Oh, Louis! Pete killed! And Annie?

BRANDT

Went to Cape Town last week. It's where you ought to be.

META

Oh, how dreadful! Poor Pete! And you got away without being hurt at all?

BRANDT (with an uneasy laugh)

'So. Don't know why. S'pose I oughter be where Pete is 'stead o' bein' here makin' love to Hawk Farrell's wife.

META

Don't, Louis! How can you—at such a time?

BRANDT

I don't care. I love you!

META

Louis, you promised—if I said nothing to Ted—

BRANDT

Ted's name's "Hawk," an' the hawk flies 'way all the time. He don't want you the way I do. I loved you before he did, an' you went back on me—yes, you did! I've bin drunk ever since, haven't I? Well, that's because I want you all the time.

META (frightened at the look in the man's eyes)

Oh, Louis, please go away. I'm so

sorry for what's happened to you an' Pete—but you promised not to say those things again to me. Ted will be here in a minute. Oh, go away—please go away!

BRANDT

Didn't I go away? I wen' away for six months an' tried to forget you—Tried to kill myself drinkin'—but I loved you too hard for that, an' I want you.

META

Louis, don't! It's not fair to talk like that to me when Ted isn't here and I'm helpless.

BRANDT (lurching forward)

What's Hawk got that I ain't? I've done scout work equal to his, an' not so long ago either—Be doin' it now if it wasn't for you.

META (going to him timidly)

Please, won't you sit down quietly and let's talk of something else?

BRANDT

Think I'm drunk, eh? Well, so I am, but not *all* drunk, see? Pete's dead—nobody gives a damn about me now, only—I love you an' I oughter have you. Meta, Hawk Farrell don't love you, else he wouldn't leave you alone all the time.

META

Louis, don't talk so wildly, please! Ted has to be away; you ought to know that—

BRANDT

I don't know it—hear? I wouldn't leave you alone in this place. Now, listen! You're goin' to come away with me, an' I'll tell you why. The Boers hold every road from here to the British lines, an' Hawk's dead or he'd be here by now. He couldn't get through without bein' killed, an' he'd sure try—so you can forget him.

META (gazing terrified into the man's face)

You—know—he's killed?

BRANDT (looks at her, but avoids her eyes and nods his head)

META

No, no, no! Oh, God! God help me!

(She sinks sobbing upon the floor.)

BRANDT

That's why I've come for you. They'll be down on to this place before long. I've got a horse outside. Come with me, an' we'll get out o' this somehow an' go to Cape Town. Will you come?

META (*rising slowly and unsteadily*)

Go—and leave me alone!

(She points to the door.)

BRANDT

Not 'less you come, too. By God, you shall come!

(Crosses quickly and catches META by the shoulder.)

META (*half hysterically*)

Get away! Don't touch me! I believe you're lying just because you want to get me away from here. Oh, he's not dead!—no, no, Teddy boy! Go, I tell you! No—no, wait!—tell me first—You don't know he's killed—you don't!—say you don't!

BRANDT (*evidently lying*)

I know what I heard—

META

Then I want to die, too. But you only heard it, didn't you? It may be all wrong. It is all wrong—and if he is alive he will come here—he promised and he'll come. I'll wait for him on my knees—praying—praying for him and for us. Oh, God wouldn't let him be killed—not yet—not till he knows—that we are waiting for him.

BRANDT

We! What d'you mean?

META (*turning with her face smiling and uplifted*)

I and—my child.

BRANDT (*falling back a step*)Meta! (*Passing his hand over his forehead and looking away.*) God! And I—pah! Meta!

(There comes a sound of a horse galloping wildly.)

META

Hark! It's Ted! (*Runs to the door and flings it open.*) Ted, Ted! is that you?

(The horse has stopped and the voice of the rider is heard calling.)

VOICE

Coming! Go in and close that door!

(META comes in and closes door, lis-

tening intently, joy and fear both showing in her face. A step is heard outside and HAWK FARRELL enters quickly, shutting and bolting the door behind him. META throws herself into his arms. He kisses her hastily, then, crouching, he goes to the window and jerks down the shade.)

HAWK

They're after me, though they don't know I'm aware of it. Don't get between the window and that light! Be careful! I think there are four or five of 'em. Hullo! Louis, how's this?

META

They burned Louis's place and killed Pete, so Louis came on here.

HAWK

Damn them, anyhow! Glad you got out of it alive, Louis. Now, Girlie, a bite of food in my pocket, and a kiss, and I'll have to get out of this some way or another. It's a case of dispatches this time.

META

Papers?

HAWK

No, in my head, so I hope the Boers won't get 'em.

META

Oh, don't joke about it, Ted. Is there much danger?

HAWK

I won't keep it from you, old girl. It's a tight fix. Had the message given me at headquarters twelve hours ago and I've been going ever since—only stopped for a bite and a fresh horse at Chester, and then again at Callahan's ranch for another horse. I struck a foraging party of Boers seven miles south of here and some of them followed me but kept their distance. I owe it to you and General Lord Bobs not to get wiped out without getting into Ladysmith—but if I leave the house I'm afraid I'll get potted for a dead certainty, and yet, I've got to do it and do it quick, too. Haven't you a suggestion, Brandt?

BRANDT

Do you want a suggestion from a man who's bin makin' love to your wife?

HAWK (*striding to BRANDT and taking him by the shoulder*)

Look here, Brandt, you've talked that way before when you were drunk, and I guess you're drunk now—but listen here! You're going to stop it right away. This is no time to talk damn foolishness.

BRANDT

All right—all right! We'll forget—all of us'll forget. (*Looking at META.*) An' I'm goin' to talk sense 'stead of damn foolishness, see?

HAWK

Oh, get—

BRANDT (*raising his voice*)

Listen t'me! (*Passes his hand over his forehead in a dazed sort of way, then continues more rapidly and connectedly as though sobering.*) You say those fellows are probably watching the place outside there an' they don't know you know it— (*Pause.*) Do they know you?

HAWK

What do you mean—my face? Can't say, but it isn't at all likely. What's your game?

BRANDT

Huh! Guess they know your clothes—all same. Where's your horse?

HAWK

Round back of the house.

BRANDT (*nodding his head*)

That's all right. See here! S'pose I was you for an hour or so an' they got hold o' me, I guess you'd find a way of gettin' through while I kept 'em guessin'— How?

HAWK

But—

BRANDT

Wait a sec. They can't do anything to me, an' they can't get anything out of me, 'cause I don't know anything, but they'll think I'm you, 'cause I'll make 'em, see? Any way of gettin' out o' this place but the door?

HAWK

Up those steps—out on the roof—and then drop. But there's only one chance for me to get across the open veldt around the house, and that is by getting those chaps right in here. Another thing, if you went outside that

door they'd shoot, for they probably think I've got papers instead of verbal dispatches.

BRANDT

Well, get ready anyhow; you may get a chance.

HAWK (*putting on belt, which META has filled with cartridges, then looking to his revolvers*)

Nothing to do but take it running, I guess.

META (*throwing her arms around FARRELL's neck*)

Oh, Ted, my Ted—you mustn't go now—you mustn't! I'm a little miserable coward, I know—but, Ted—

HAWK

Little woman, it's you who mustn't talk that way. I've got something to do and you're going to help me do it. Now kiss me and be brave. I'm not the Hawk for nothing, you know. Quiet now! Good-bye!

BRANDT

Wait a bit there, Hawk! Your wife's got something to tell you before you go—

META

Louis, please—!

BRANDT

Yes, you have— Quick, Hawk, take her in that room!

META (*who has retreated to door at right, her face turned away but her hand held out to FARRELL, who now goes quickly to her*)

Ted!

(*BRANDT, left alone, looks after them, listens, crosses quickly to where some old clothes of HAWK's are hanging on a nail in the wall and looks them over. He finds nothing that he wants, and turning to the table catches sight of the khaki coat which META has been mending and which exactly resembles that worn by FARRELL. Hastily putting it on, he goes to the outer door and pauses with his hand on the latch.*)

BRANDT

They've got to come in here so they can't see him start. Will he go? Yes, she'll make him. Now to get them in here— What'll I do? God, let me think! I owe her one an' him, too—

an' I'm no use. Ah! the light—the shadow on the window!

(Without hesitation he staggers forward between the lamp and the window, thus throwing his shadow clearly upon the shade. There is a shot from without—a crash of broken glass—and BRANDT reels and suddenly crumples up, a dead man. FARRELL and META rush in as approaching shouts are heard from the outside.)

META (taking in the situation at a glance)

Oh, Ted! It's Louis—they've shot him—he did it for you! You must go—quickly—up there! Oh, go, go!

(FARRELL hesitates, looking at the motionless form of Louis, and as META hurriedly drags him to the foot of the stairs, he kisses her, just as there comes a banging on the door and the butt of a rifle crashes through another pane of the window. Then he darts up the stairs as the door is burst open admitting four or five Boers.)

BOER LEADER

The man who was in here—quick!

(META silently points to the prostrate figure of LOUIS BRANDT. The Boers hasten to the corpse to search for the dispatches.)

CURTAIN



NIGHT WIND

By MADISON CAWEIN

SILENCE. The reticent stream makes not a sound; The forest sleeps and winds are hushed around. Slowly the moon, like some wood spirit, breasts, With bosom bared of pearl, the vasty wood, And a white moment on the hilltop rests, Startled, astonished at the solitude. Silence. A bird stirs in the nested leaves, And the deep bosom of the forest heaves.

Murmur. Conspiracies of tempest pass, Swaying the forest as robes sweep the grass: Aeolian raiment rustles; and dim feet Of darkness dance anticipating dreams That die before fulfillment. Whispers meet And syllabled voices of the hills and streams Murmur. The night wind passes; then again, Far off, the caution of approaching rain.

THE BLONDE LADY

A Poem in Prose

By ANNA TRESSLER LONG

IN her boudoir of azure and silver the Blonde Lady sits at her dressing table and rolls her shining hair.

Her eyes rest oftenest on the face in the mirror—but next to that on the face in the great gold frame—the great gold frame that stands on the dressing table in that Holy of Holies, her boudoir of azure and silver.

Two portraits fit that frame.

Two portraits of two men—each straight and strong and handsome—but not to be mistaken the one for the other, even at a quick glance.

Two lovers were wont to come to the boudoir of azure and silver.

Two lovers who never met.

The lips of each sought the red lips of the Blonde Lady, and the eyes of each saw in the great gold frame on the dressing table—the portrait of his own face.

“It is You, my Beloved”—the Blonde Lady would whisper—“You, whose face I adore, sleepily, expectantly, in the morning—slowly, longingly, at midnight—

O my Beloved!”

In her boudoir of azure and silver the Blonde Lady rolls her shining hair. And shining tears slip down her pale face onto her robe of lace.

Last night one of the Two came—and she had forgotten to change the portrait in the great gold frame on the dressing table.

THE JEWEL OF LIFE

By RITA WEIMAN

ANNIE spread the black satin gown for Madame to step into, drew it up over the slim figure and fastened the few hooks that held its sweeping folds in place. Then she stepped back to admire.

"Madame should wear black, nothing but black."

The woman looked down into the little maid's adoring eyes. "Annie, do you realize that each time I put on a new gown, you say the same thing about the color of it?"

Annie beamed. "It's because you are so wonderful in everything, madame."

"Say rather it's because everything looks beautiful to those big country eyes of yours, you little field mouse!" She turned as she spoke to take a bunch of violets and orchids from the box Annie held, but, on a sudden impulse, dropped the flowers and drew the girl close to her side. "Do you know," she paused, a smile of tenderness crossing her face, "you're quite a love. I'm glad I found you."

"Glad you found me!" The intensity of Annie's gratitude choked her. Madame glad to have found her, little Annie Haines! Why, life had begun for her that first dreadful day in New York, when Madame's horse had ruthlessly trod under foot the bewildered little country girl. Her gasp of astonishment, as she opened her eyes to find the strange, beautiful woman bending over her, might have been her first breath; nothing mattered that had gone before.

And the days that had followed, wonderful days, when, instead of the hospital one might have expected, she was attended in Madame's home by

her own physician, were like a step into fairyland. Up in the country town, where she had shirked her duties to sit in the fields picturing the place she was to find in the great metropolis, no vision of anything like this had come to her. The rich velvets, the satins, the soft, creamy laces—and Madame, herself, the mystery, the loveliness of her! She was like some heroine. Her eyes could grow soft and shadowy as the heavy black pearls suspended from her ears, or again glow, as they had yesterday, like the rubies she had flung into their satin case and sent away the moment they arrived. And her hair—it was such a strange, such a fascinating red. Annie's gold-glinted brown looked quite dead beside it. Her careless grace, her smile, her radiance—there never could be such another!

Madame glad to have found her! Annie glowed with the joy of it. "Then you're not sorry"—she hesitated—"that—Marie went away and you let me take her place?"

"Indeed not! You've taken the best kind of care of me. Why, I've only had you—in office—two weeks, and I feel already that I want to keep you always." Madame's white finger teasingly traced a line down the deep cleft in Annie's chin. "How long do you think you'll want to stay, little girl?"

Annie thrilled at the touch. "I want you to keep me forever," she answered fervently.

Her mistress laughed, gave a half-sigh of relief and pinched the rosy cheek. "You are a dear. But didn't you leave anyone in—where you came from?"

"Nobody except—" Annie blushed. "And he don't count, anyhow."

"Oh!" Madame's teeth flashed in a dazzling smile. "He doesn't, doesn't he? Well, who does?"

"You!" Annie caught Madame's hand, amazed at her own daring. "You're so good and so beautiful." The woman hastily looked away. "Everybody loves you. Even Dr. Hastings, all the time he was tending me, kept looking at you as if he wished you were the sick one."

Madame laughed, though with a touch of bitterness. Annie was all contrition. "I'm sorry—I hadn't any right—" She leaned forward anxiously, dropping the hand she held.

The woman rose. "Well," she said lightly, "if you've really come to stay, we'll have to change your name—christen you all over again, I mean. I couldn't stand an 'Annie' around me all day. Let me see—'Anna'?" She frowned. "'Ann'?" She shook her head. "'Annette!'" And Madame beamed. "How do you like it?"

Annie clasped her hands delightedly.

"Very well, my new Annette," her mistress laughed, "that brown marabout on the table—it's for you. No, don't thank me—I'm giving it to you because I can't wear it. Now run along; there's the bell."

The girl stooped to smooth the silvery black satin that clung caressingly to the long, supple form, and on her way out stopped here and there to puff out a rosy cushion or straighten a lacy cover.

When she returned to announce the visitor, Madame was bending over a velvet box that had revealed itself tied to the bunch of violets and orchids. The woman's eyes were shining and a soft rose flushed her usual pallor. From its crimson velvet bed a single matchless diamond gleamed up at her, a silvery thread as fine as its rays, ready to clasp it about her throat. She lifted the stone, and for a moment its cold glitter kissed her warm lips; then, catching sight of the girl, she hastily passed it over, and an instant later it sparkled on her breast, the chain that

held it almost invisible against her white flesh.

"Get out my cloak, the fur one, Ann—Annette," she called, smiling from the doorway. "I'll be back for it in a moment."

The little maid fondled each delicate garment of chiffon and lace as she hung it away. The personality of her mistress, exquisite, elusive, alluring, pervaded them all like some rare perfume. She caught up a pale golden peignoir that had so lately slid from the satiny shoulders and crushed it against her face. How Madame's husband must have adored her! What had he been like to make him worthy of her—how old, how big, how strong? There were such dozens of questions she longed to ask, but her mistress never spoke of him.

And now, this man she had just admitted. He had not been among the callers of the past few weeks; yet he had entered without question, flinging her his fur-lined coat with a careless, "Tell Madame I'm here." And when she hesitated, asking his name, he had looked at her curiously, as though he thought she ought to know it. Perhaps—she thrilled at the possibility and looked up from her task of replacing the gold heads on the decapitated glass jars on the dressing table—perhaps Madame was going to marry him! Oh, it was so glorious—this new life! As delicious as the new name—Annette. Only Madame could have thought of it!

She gave the toilet articles a final twist, trying to recall Marie's Frenchy way of arranging them, and crossed the hall; but at the drawing-room she stopped abruptly, eyes wide, hands clasped ecstatically.

Her mistress and the stranger were standing in the center of the room, but the two figures had become as one—Madame was crushed in the man's arms and his face was bent to hers. "You're home again, my darling! I've missed you—wanted you so!" the woman was murmuring, her voice, her eyes rich with caresses.

Annette took in the words and the

picture before she realized that neither was meant for her. She stared dizzily and her ears strained for more. So, she had been right—had guessed the truth. This was the man her mistress loved—the man she would marry. How wonderful! It was like a play—like a scene on the stage. The little country girl tingled with the happiness of it.

Then Madame looked up, and Annette, realizing that she was an eavesdropper, stole past the door, her cheeks scarlet with shame. But on her way back, the fur cloak flung over her arm, she could not resist pausing again; there was magnetism in the tableau that had just filled her vision. Madame was seated now on a long green divan, the man standing above her, and both were laughing happily.

"It is good to have a look at you again," he was saying. "Do you know, Adele, you're a credit to my art. I'd like to paint you just so, with the light from that bracket trying to form a halo over you."

"I don't want to be haloed by anything but your love." She looked up at him with one of her brilliant smiles, and he at once sat down beside her, catching her long, tapering hand in both of his. "Besides, it wouldn't be exactly becoming—any other kind of halo, would it?"

"Why not? Temples have been built to the goddess of love and beauty, and men and women have worshiped—just as I worship you, dear heart," he half whispered, bending over her.

Madame pouted adorably. "Sometimes I think you care more for my artistic effect than you do for me. I often wonder what might happen if you should some day run across a new face to inspire you."

"There never could be another like you," he answered promptly, echoing Annette's own thoughts. "But, speaking of new faces, wasn't that a recent importation—the little girl who let me in?"

"Oh, Annie—Annette, I mean—yes." And if the maid, blushing for her stealth on the other side of the

portières, had been held irresistibly a moment before, the mention of her own name now rooted her where she stood. "Yes, Annette is new and a dear. I ran across her quite by accident—altogether by accident, I should say," she laughed. Then followed the story of how Madame's brougham had collided with the country girl just arrived in town, how she had been ill for weeks and finally remained with Madame as her maid—the same story that Annette repeated wonderingly to herself each day. "I knew she was honest," was the conclusion, "the minute I looked into her big country eyes, and you can realize what an asset that is to me. You know how careless I am—about everything—"

"It is your chief charm—your *laissez-faire, laissez-aller*," he interrupted, his lips touching a curl that had struggled loose from her tawny mass of hair and rested confidently against the white neck.

"Well, it's not exactly a convenience, my irresponsible artist," Madame responded with a low laugh; "and Annette looks after me beautifully. She's so neat and precise, and considers every move she makes as seriously as if it were a matter of life and death. Quite the opposite of me, you see; she acts as a sort of antidote. I'm really growing to need her. She's as sweet—and as pure—as a wild rose." For a moment her face was turned from him.

"And Marie?" he put in hastily.

"Marie? Oh, she has found a better place—through Bobby Carlson, I think."

"So!" He smiled knowingly. "By the way," and his eyes narrowed jealously, "you haven't seen any of the old crowd since I've been away, have you?"

"Seen them—yes," Madame answered, smiling up at him.

The effect of her words was lightninglike. He sprang to his feet and fire seemed to start from his narrowed lids. "And you dare to tell me—"

She laid a restraining hand on his arm. "You know—there's no one—but you," she interrupted him slowly,

softly. "There never—will be. Why, only yesterday—I sent back some rubies Van tried to make me keep." Her hand went up to the gleaming diamond on her breast. "This is the only jewel I mean to wear now. It is your gift—my jewel of life," she breathed, her lips to his.

But the next morning, as Madame sat at the dressing table, raising her arms lazily above her head, spreading them wide before her, gazing on their smooth, rounded beauty with half-reluctant admiration, she suddenly caught a glimpse in the mirror of a white face and eyes swollen from weeping.

"Annette, child, have you been ill?" she asked, veering round on the low stool.

"No, madame," came in a choked voice; "I've been wicked."

Madame leaned back against the dresser and laughed, cool, rippling laughter that invited companionship. "You—wicked?"

"Yes, madame—last night—"

"What happened—last night?" Madame straightened a bit.

"I—I watched you, madame." Annette's full lips trembled and her eyes filled afresh with tears.

The woman leaned forward and her hand closed like a vice over the girl's. "When?" she demanded.

Annette gazed into the beautiful face grown suddenly dead white, a look almost of fright clouding its radiance. Then she broke down completely and sank to the floor, her lips bent to the hand that gripped hers. "Oh, madame," she sobbed, "forgive me—even if you send me away. I don't know why I did it—I didn't mean to. I was passing the door when you—when he—when I was going for your coat, and I looked in. I didn't mean to, but when I saw you there—together—it was so beautiful—I—I stopped. And then—I—listened—"

"Yes"—Madame impatiently shook the hand she held—"and what—did you hear?"

Annette buried her face in the creamy chiffon that billowed about her mis-

tress like seafoam ushering another Venus into the world. "He spoke of how beautiful you are," came in a smothered voice, "and of how he—loved you, madame; and you—told him about Marie and—and me—" The voice died away.

Madame clasped the jewel that still glistened on her breast, and, had Annette looked up at the moment, it would have been into eyes grown soft and dim. "I—love—him, Annette," she said, resting a hand on the bent head.

"Yes, madame," Annette looked up, worship in her eyes; "it is so—wonderful."

The woman whirled sharply about until she again faced the mirror. Then she bent down and took a soft, downy puff from one of the drawers. "Annette," she said, drawing its furry whiteness across her face and neck, "have you ever thought of what might become of you, here in New York, if some day I— No, I'm not going to send you away," as she caught the look almost of terror that sped across the girl's face. "Come here, you baby. You're just about the youngest thing I've ever known." Annette knelt down and her mistress leaned over her, tilting the cleft chin and gazing long into the clear depths of her wide gray eyes. And then suddenly there came a choked sob; the girl was caught and held close. "I love you, dear," Madame whispered, and kissed her with lingering softness. "Don't ever grow up, little girl," she breathed.

After that the relation between mistress and maid underwent a subtle change. A deeper sympathy seemed to bind them. For, though Annette still worshiped, it was no longer from afar. It had been revealed that Madame loved her. Why, she did not know. The wonder of it filled her days, and at night she would often awaken, feeling again the touch of the warm lips, the tender pressure of the firm, beautiful arms.

Each hour became sweeter than the last, and as time went on there was even an exchange of confidences. Madame

heard more of the boy who worked and waited in the little country town. "But of course I'm not going back now," Annette would add.

In turn, the girl came to know the blond-bearded painter Madame loved. She was told of his devotion to art, notwithstanding his great wealth. She listened to glowing descriptions of his studio in an adjacent building, and of his pictures, many of which reproduced the beauty of her mistress.

Gradually he also became a part of this dream of life. He was, no doubt, a great man, and Annette felt strangely awed by the interest he seemed to take in her. Often he would stop in the crimson-shaded light of the hall to exchange a word with her, and once he leaned down, eagerly scanning the girl's face. From the soft brown hair, puritanically parted, and the clean gray eyes that met his frankly, his gaze traveled to the tremulous, full-lipped mouth and deep cleft chin—and there it rested. When his eyes were raised again there was a puzzled look in them. But presently they began to glitter—like sword points touched by the sun. He bit his lower lip thoughtfully.

"Do you know," he said slowly, "you're a most attractive little lady. Some day I'm going to—paint you." And he went in to Madame, who greeted him with her usual joyous laugh of welcome.

Annette couldn't believe she had heard aright. He had expressed a desire to paint her; the idea seemed preposterous. That an artist who had painted great ladies, for whom Madame herself had posed, should find any trace of beauty in little Annie Haines was positively silly. Yet that night she found herself pausing before the mirror, looking at her face and form for the first time with seeing eyes.

And before she knew it she had turned in the neck of her blouse, curving her throat this way and that, studying the various poses as she had seen Madame do before the low dressing table, carefully, analytically, as though the reflected figure belonged to another. And after a time she seemed

to see in the glass a white face craned forward on its long, supple throat, lips intensely red and laughing and curved up at the corners, eyes red hot, or again smoldering dark and dusky, or glowing like the great jewel her mistress wore—the symbol of her love, Madame had called it. She heaved a sigh—of love and of vague longing—as her own reflected face came out of the background.

"I want to be—like you," she blushingly admitted when asked next day why she had piled her masses of brown hair all crimped and puffed on top of her head.

Madame frowned, and suddenly her eyes flashed fire. She caught Annette by the arm, shaking her almost savagely. "Don't ever say that again," she commanded.

The artist, however, seemed to approve of the new headdress. "When I paint you, it will be with your hair parted," he commented that afternoon as he waited in the drawing-room for Madame, "but this way—well, you look more—possible. It's in keeping with that mouth and that fascinating chin."

Annette busied herself uneasily with the velvet curtains. She didn't quite know how to meet the familiarity of his tone and manner. No doubt, as Madame's future husband, he had the right to speak to her servants as he pleased, but there was something about the way he looked at her that made the girl uncomfortable.

He had stopped before a mirror to straighten his tie and twirl the tips of his blond mustache, but he turned as she started to leave the room. "Don't go," he begged; "I like to look at you. You're as graceful as a little Hebe." Annette blushed and shifted awkwardly from one foot to the other. "No, not that way," the painter laughed; "it spoils the picture."

He watched her closely as he spoke, and when her eyes finally drooped before his, he leaned over and took a cigarette from a silver box on the tabouret at his side. "By the way," he remarked carelessly, "what time did Madame say she'd get home?"

At once Annette was herself—the correct, well trained little maid. "At five o'clock, sir."

The man took out his watch. "Good. It's only a bit past four. How would you like to take a walk over to my studio? We can be back in half an hour." He made the suggestion as though it were the most natural one in the world.

Annette gasped. "Oh, I couldn't, sir."

"Yes, you can. You'll like it. I've got some beautiful pictures," he added, laughing. But to the girl his words suggested infinite possibilities. Pictures—of Madame, perhaps!

She clasped her hands before her and her eyes glowed. "Oh, if I could!"

"Of course you can. Take off that apron and throw something about you. There's a rear entrance. We won't even have to go out to the street."

If Madame's apartment was fairylane, the room into which Annette gazed timidly from the doorway a few minutes later was like no other spot in the realms of fact or fancy; and, had she but known it, no artist deserving the name would have owned it as his workshop. Heavy velvet hangings hid the plaster walls. Silken rugs covered the floor, so that one walked soundlessly, as in a dream. Oriental lamps swung from the ceiling, their soft lights mingling in the gloom to form a somber medley of color. A red glow shone at one end of the room, as though the fire there burned incessantly without flame or ash. At the other, a balcony slid out of the darkness, and there drifted the aroma of incense from some mysterious shrine hidden beneath its shadow.

An easel stood near a large window, the curtains of which were now drawn. A palette, still laden with moist paint, lay where it had been flung carelessly on a divan. There were a few pictures, indistinguishable in the softened light.

The man watched Annette's face as she gazed wonderingly about her. "You like it?" he asked at last.

"Like it! Why, I never dreamed anything like this—in all my life."

The girl's eyes were wide with the fascination of the place. They shone through the semi-darkness, and her full lips trembled.

"Well, come, sit down and let's talk about it." She hesitated, then advanced as one in a dream and sank into the soft cushions of the divan. Her trim little figure in its black dress was half smothered by them, but they served to outline the white throat and the sweet child face set above it.

"Now"—his voice floated toward her on the scented air—"that's the way I'm going to paint you." He leaned over her and loosened a soft curl from its accustomed place.

But Annette did not heed him. She sat as one hypnotized, and when her lips parted it was to utter words that he might have put into her mouth. "Oh," she breathed, "it's beautiful. I don't ever want to leave it."

His hands, that still rested on her hair, slid softly to her shoulders. He drew her slowly toward him.

The girl looked up at him, startled, and her arms shot out to push him away. Over and above the sudden fear for self that choked her was the thought of her mistress. "Oh, don't!" she cried. "How can you—when you're going to marry Madame?"

His hands loosened their grip and amazement struck the evil look from his face. "Marry her!" He laughed outright. "Do you mean to say you didn't know—"

"Know what?" The words darting through the gloom startled them both. A figure formed itself from out the shadow under the balcony, and suddenly Madame was before them like a panther, aquiver with rage and pain—and fear. She strained forward, her sable cloak, half loosened, tugging at its clasp. In her eyes was terror, but her voice defied the man to finish his incomplete sentence.

His arms fell to his sides. The girl fled to her mistress as to a haven. "Oh, please," she began, hastening to explain, though the words trembled nervously and her eyes swam.

But Madame caught and held her

close, as a mother protecting her child. Over the girl's head her eyes met those of the man. There was a look in them new and terrible. "If I could kill you—"

The man shrugged and laughed. He had regained his composure, and the molten fire of her eyes met only admiration touched with a certain braggadocio amusement. "Jealous?" he protested. "It's becoming, my beautiful one."

"Jealous!" She clasped the girl closer. "Is a woman jealous of a dog who has bitten her and then turns on a child she loves? Hardly, my friend. If she has any strength or spirit left in her, she beats him, thrashes every inch of breath out of his body and shame into it. And then, for fear he'll try again to hurt the thing she loves, because he is what she has found him to be, she flings him out and bars her door against him. She—bars—her door—against a—beast"—the words crashed at him like bullets—"even if she has been fool enough to—love him."

The man's bravado slid from him like an uncertain garment. It was as

though a goddess of fire were searing a white hot brand across his forehead. "Adele!" he cried, trembling.

The woman looked at him as at a stranger, and finally her gaze traveled past him into the sumptuous, artificial, exotic luxury of the apartment. A slow shudder shook her body. Her hand went up to her throat, and she drew the girl toward the window. The heavy sables about her shoulders dropped, dragging with them a diamond, whose silvery thread snapped as it fell. They heaped themselves at her feet as she flung wide the sash, and the soft evening light crept in to wrap itself about her. She stood so for a long moment, head flung back, lips parted.

Then suddenly her face went down and buried itself in the soft hair of the girl within her arms. "Oh, Annie," she breathed, "take me away from it all. Take me home with you, little girl. I need you more than anything in the world—you and God's sunshine."

A moment later the heavy portières swung into place and the man stood alone, a diamond laughing mockingly up at him from a mound of furs.



NOT THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE

MRS. ASKIT—Do you intend to have an Italian garden on your place?
 MRS. NEWRICH—No. I'm afraid I could never get used to that garlic smell.



ON the heels of the red imp Sin creeps the black fury Nemesis; he is a blind man who steps between.

A DUET

By BRIAN HOOKER

THE MAN SINGS

THE night is heavy with roses,
The light hangs low in the west,
Your waist is warm within my arm,
Your head lies on my breast.
The veil of nature uncloses
And leaves us living and free,
With the morning dew at the soul of you
And the strength of night in me.

BOTH

Stars that love us
Burn above us—
Tenderly soft the breezes moan.
Love me nearly,
Love me dearly—
Only this hour's our own!

THE WOMAN SINGS

The moon is over the river,
Her light swims into my brain—
And my love's afloat like a passing note
On a harmony of pain.
Today is over forever,
Tomorrow never shall know.
Our lips have met, and my eyes are wet,
And my heart beats loud and slow.

BOTH

Stars that love us
Burn above us—
Tenderly soft the breezes moan.
Love me nearly,
Love me dearly—
Only this hour's our own!

THE GRANDSON OF YESTERDAY

By LIONEL CHEWETTE

WELL, and when are you going to expose me?" The question was asked in Mrs. Deming's conversational voice, but there was a little amused note in the full boyish tones I so much admired. I turned and tried to look at her, but the part of the piazza where we sat was well shaded, and the moonlight fell in dots and streaks only.

"Oh, I knew you at once." Mrs. Deming's tone was still conventional, but there was a hint of impatience in it. "And I knew that you recognized me, too," she went on. "In half an hour I knew what you came for. Men are so dense."

"Somebody said that before," I remarked, simply because I felt that I had to say something. She certainly had me "going." During three weeks of intimate companionship with the woman at my side I had not let fall a hint of the errand which had originally brought me to Short Sands. For days that errand had been little more than a memory, an unpleasant memory, to be pushed aside as quickly as possible.

But Mrs. Deming paid no attention to my remark. "I have been waiting for it every day," she said. "I have watched the symptoms, to see all these furry cats draw their virtuous skirts aside as I passed, and the fearful interest in the eyes of the little cats." She finished with a bitter little laugh.

Certainly I was not enjoying that conversation. "Don't you think you make too much of it?" I said. "Your—er—subsequent marriage with Deming undoubtedly regularized your position."

Mrs. Deming laughed maliciously. "I

meant to surprise you," she said, "but I didn't expect to throw you quite so far from your balance. That"—she leaned forward and looked at me squarely—"is positively the crudest thing. I doubt if Colonel Agnew could have equaled that, and," she went on, "his nearest approach to an emotion was his hatred of me."

"But why, why—" I stumbled in my speech badly.

Mrs. Deming made a gesture of impatience. "Oh, he had his mold all ready," she said, "and I didn't fit." She was silent a moment. "You didn't know Colonel Agnew?" she asked.

"You are mistaken," I said; "I did know him rather well." As far as I could see her face, she seemed to be looking at me curiously. She knew, and I knew that she knew, that in my knowledge of her first husband lay the best excuse I could find for her.

"And"—she leaned back in the piazza chair and placed one hand back of her head—"and Arthur—Deming, you know—found out his mistake before he died." Her voice was very weary. "I couldn't bear to see him pay. I wanted to pay myself."

"You loved him!" The words came of themselves. The instant they were uttered I would have given worlds to recall them. But Mrs. Deming shook her head.

"No," she said simply, "I had not that excuse. But he loved me, just at first, and he was kind always."

I was rather getting my hand on myself by this time, but did this woman understand what she was telling me, a man, who, but for a very slight ac-

quaintance years before, had been a complete stranger up to three weeks ago? And yet, somehow, it didn't seem strange that she should be telling me these things. I tried to look at her, but her face was carefully in the shadow.

"You haven't answered my question." The change in her voice was startling. I jumped a little, I believe. "When does the blow fall?" she demanded briskly. "Once"—her tone changed a little—"three years ago, I was in the mountains, and a man I used to know came to the hotel one evening; and the next morning the men were smiling and the women were stony or fidgety, or both. Really, I would like a little notice."

"Don't!" I said. I remember that my chief emotion at that moment was a desire to take the life of the man who had told.

Mrs. Deming leaned forward into the light. "Why," she said mockingly, "surely you are not hesitating! Remember that I am dangerous. I could elope with Reggy Tower any time I wished. He is a dear boy. And then what will you say to mamma when you go back—mamma, you know, who sent you here to save her baby from my clutches?" Her eyes were sparkling in the moonlight, and she nodded audaciously.

I made an attempt at self-control. "How did you know?" I said.

She laughed, and I could have sworn that there was not a hint of anything in that laugh but pure merriment. "If you ever want to conceal your thoughts again, Mr. Horton," she said, "you should take lessons in facial expression first. If you had meant me any good you would have mentioned our old acquaintance at once. A few questions to Reggy did the rest." She leaned back again. "Come, sir, when is it to be?"

"Never," I said. Her raillery had brought back my self-possession.

"Oh!" she said. "But what will you say to mamma up in town?"

"There will be nothing to say," I answered.

Mrs. Deming looked at me curiously. "Reggy is in no danger, and never was," I finished.

"No." She spoke slowly after a pause. "You are right. But—how do you know?"

I laughed in my turn. "I know you," I said. "Do you realize that we have been much together these past three weeks? I have studied my subject." And I made her a little bow.

She was silent and so was I. My mind was running back over a succession of tramps, drives and canoe trips with a companion who was possessed of a boy's voice and a man's spirit of good fellowship.

"And when do you leave?" Again Mrs. Deming's tone was easy, conversational and mocking.

I turned to her quickly, but her face was in the shadow again and I saw nothing. "You have done your work, what you came for, you know," she went on in the same tone. "Oh, I read stories sometimes, myself." She laughed a little.

"Stories!" I said.

Mrs. Deming laughed again. "Oh, don't pretend," she said, and again there was a hard note in her voice, "on our last night. You know those stories where the family friend cuts out the tender youth and foils the adventuress."

"Our last night!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean?"

She leaned forward and looked at me keenly. "I am going tomorrow," she said, and then in a lower tone: "Did you think that a woman would talk with a man as I have with you tonight if she expected to see him again, ever?" She sank back in her chair. "You are not dull, Jack Horton, but your knowledge of some things—"

It was the only time she had used my first name, and it stirred me. I leaned forward in my turn. "And did you think, Lucile Deming," I said, "that a man would be in daily companionship with you for three weeks and then let you go and leave him when it pleased you?"

Her eyes popped open in the way I had come to expect and to watch for in

the three weeks past. But the hardness, the daring, the mockery that I had seen there that evening were gone.

"What do you mean?" Her voice was very low and she seemed to shrink from my gaze, but the moon had moved and the trees no longer protected her.

"I love you," I said.

Her breath came in a long shuddering gasp, and she hid her face in her hands. "No! No!" she said.

"Yes! Yes!" I replied. "I love you. I have loved you three weeks, I think."

Lucille dropped her hands and looked at me with a pained intensity, but as she looked, the pain died away and its place was taken by something else, a something I had surprised in her glance once before, the time I had caught her in my arms to save her from falling when she slipped on the rocks.

"Then it wasn't," she whispered, "it wasn't the stories?"

"Damn the stories!" I said. She had used a word in that connection that I didn't fancy.

"And you really love me?" she went on.

"I do," I answered, "and I am waiting for you to say that you love me."

"You want to marry me—me?" There was incredulity in her voice, but it was happy incredulity.

"I have said it," I said.

She rose from her chair and stood at the edge of the piazza looking out over the water. She was a woman who always seemed to be standing very squarely on her feet. I think the impression was due entirely to the poise of her head, but tonight it was stronger than ever. Once she extended her arms wide, and once she laughed a little, the little bubbling laugh that had to be surprised out of her, the one I had lain in wait and plotted for. Finally she turned to me.

"Jack, Jack Horton," she began, and her voice lingered over my name, "you have made me so happy tonight. You don't know, you can't know, how happy you have made me—and proud." The light in her eyes was wonderful,

and her lips trembled a little. "I thought I should never be so happy. Oh, I shall be unhappy again, often and often, but I shall be proud always."

"Do you love me?" I said.

"Don't!" Her voice and her eyes pleaded with me. "Let me have this one night. It must all begin again tomorrow, but not the same. Oh, so, so different!" The last words were hardly a breath.

"Do you love me?" I said.

She made a little gesture of protest, assent, submission; it meant them all. "Yes," she said simply, "I love you. You have a right to know it. And, yes, you may kiss me, once. Ah, can't you understand?" There was a note of despair in her voice.

"I can understand that you love me, Lucille," I said. But she broke away from my arms.

"Listen," she said. There was trouble in her face, but she smiled at me bravely. "I do love you, but"—there was a little catch in her voice—"I must go away tomorrow, and you—I must never see you again. Oh, I must!" she went on in answer to my unspoken protest. "It is the only way. Listen, dear. I do love you, but men mustn't smile at the name of your wife. Oh, I know," she hurried on; "I know what you're going to say, and, dear, you're grand when you throw your shoulders back that way. I love you so, dear, but you can't take me from the mud; you can only come down yourself."

"Then, in God's name—" I broke out, but Lucille stopped me.

"Hush, dear!" she cried. "You know that people never forgive some things, and I know it. Ah, don't I know it! No; let me finish. You know they say the woman always pays. It is not true, dear. Didn't I see Deming day after day for two years?" Her voice was very bitter. "And to see you—" She stopped and I saw her bosom heave as she struggled for self-control.

I took her in my arms despite her resistance and held her so. "Listen, Lucille," I said in my turn. "There is to be no more paying. I will not and

you shall not. You can't see it tonight, perhaps, dear, but you will tomorrow and every day more." I laughed a bit, I believe. Never had the blood bounded through my veins as at that moment.

Lucille's head dropped to my shoulder, and she sobbed a little quietly. "No, no," she said once brokenly, and "Yes, yes," I said again.

Just then Reggy Tower came around the corner. "Hello, Jack!" he began, and then he saw Lucille. She was—well, rather hidden. He stopped as though he had been stung.

"Reggy," I said, "Mrs. Deming has just agreed to marry me."

The boy had been well brought up. He congratulated me and wished joy to Lucille very nicely, and if he saw Lucille's tears, he treated them as a gentleman should treat a matter not meant for his eyes. Then he gripped my hand again. "I hope I know how to take a licking, Jack," he said.

It was some moments after Reggy's departure that a little laugh bubbled up from my right shoulder. I looked down expectantly.

"The furry cats!" said Lucille. "When they find out!" And I laughed, too.

"Oh!" I said. "This news has been discounted for three weeks."



NEWBORN WITH EACH NEW DAY MY LOVE AWAKES

By IMPERIA McINTYRE

NEWBORN with each new day my love awakes.
I open on the morning rapturous eyes
Glad with the gladness of a great surprise
And joyous with the anxious joy that shakes
Hearts with the wonder of it, and which makes
Full many and full many a doubt arise
Lest, having won, I may not keep the prize
Too rich for my desert—this love that takes
With strong, commanding hands my soul and will
Consenting captives to its conquering sway,
Free only in unfreedom. Ah, be still,
Thoughts of misgiving; and let me obey
Those impulses of ecstasy that thrill
When love wakes with the daylight and the day!



ALL men have follies. Those of the wise man are known only to himself; those of the fool to all men but himself.

A STAR GOES OUT

By JAMES BURGHIE

THE lawyer leaned back in his chair and opened the door of the box in response to the soft knock. An usher stood outside.

"Mr. Barron?" he said.

The lawyer touched the journalist on the arm. "Jim, a message for you."

"Wait," said the journalist curtly. He was leaning with both arms on the front of the box, watching intently every movement of the actress. Alone on the stage, she was writing at a small desk. She wrote deliberately, silently, in contrast to the conventional stage method of scribbling at stenographic speed, repeating each word as (presumably) written. Presently she rose, the letter in her hand, but in moving away from the desk her sleeve caught a small porcelain figure, knocking it to the floor, where it lay broken in two pieces. She stooped and picked them up and, laying the letter on the desk, tried to fit them together, at last crossing to the door with the figure in her hand, leaving the letter where it lay. As the door closed behind her the curtains fell swiftly and silently—and then the applause came.

Jim sat up with a sigh. "Good!" he said, stretching his arms. "Oh, what was it you said, Webster?" Then, as he noticed the open door and the waiting usher: "Ah, Hodgson! Sorry to keep you, but I had to see that exit. Did you want me?"

"Miss Leigh would like you to come round, sir," replied the man.

"Come with me and be introduced, Webster," said Jim, rising.

The two quickly made their way through the steel door leading to the stage, and were just in time to see the

curtains close again on the star after the third call. Miss Leigh waited for an instant, then as the stage manager held up his hand with an "All right!" and the electrician threw the switch, turning off the footlights, she turned and came across to the wings.

"This is nice of you, Jim," she said, holding out her hand. "I particularly wanted to see you this evening."

"You know I drop in whenever I am in town, Mary," answered Jim. He introduced his companion, and said, "You sent for me, Mary?"

"Yes," said Miss Leigh. "I want you to come to supper after the show. And of course you'll bring Mr. Webster."

"If I shall not be in the way—" began the lawyer.

"On the contrary," said Miss Leigh. "This is not to be a business meeting. It is only that I have two surprises to spring on Jim, that I want him to know of before anyone else. You see, things are running very smoothly now. We like our parts and each other, and the public likes the piece. There are no clouds in the sky."

"All ready!" came from the stage manager, as the footlights flashed up at a wave of his hand. "Clear, please!" to Miss Leigh, who promptly moved away from the scene, followed by Webster.

"I am the only worry the company has," continued the actress. "They never feel quite sure of what I am going to do next, especially when I am on alone."

"The end of that last act was new, wasn't it?" asked Webster.

"New tonight," was the reply. "What did Jim say?"

"Good!" was all he said."

"I thought he would like it," she said in a tone of satisfaction. "He is sure to speak of it later on. I could feel him watching me."

"Up!" called the stage manager, clapping his hands twice. The curtains parted and lifted, and the girl in white went on through the door in the upper corner, her fresh young voice ringing clear above the rustle of the audience settling into their seats.

"About a quarter to twelve. Mind now!" said Miss Leigh as the two men turned to go.

"Coming, Bennett," she said to her maid, who appeared suddenly from a staircase at the side.

The two friends went back to their box. When the star appeared again Jim rose. "I thought so," he said, looking at his watch. "I know just what she'll do now. Let's go."

They got their hats and coats and were soon out in the Strand.

"How long have you known her," asked Jim, lighting a cigarette.

"About twenty minutes," replied the lawyer. "Why?"

"Don't be brilliant!" snapped Jim. "You're not addressing a jury. How long is it since you first saw her on the stage?"

"About four years—or a little more, I think."

"Since she first played London. What has struck you most in her work?" continued the journalist.

"Chiefly the fact that it does not seem to be work," replied Webster. "Also that she is hardly ever twice alike, and that she seems to live in her parts and to play them as if they were so many phases of her own character."

"You've got it. And if you knew anything about the parts she hasn't played, you would have the whole thing. I want to tell you how she broke into the business, as I gave her her first start—assisted by accident."

"How long have you known her?"

"About seven years. Good friends all the time, too. No, nothing more, you old cynic. You know me."

"What's made you so nervous then all of a sudden? The thought of the surprise in store?"

"I suppose so. I'm always a little afraid of surprises—when a woman prepares them. However, I had better tell you the story. When I first met Mary Leigh her name was Vera Montmorency. Fact, I assure you! I was getting together a vaudeville company for the road. One of my many experiments. I had got most of my lot—a dozen acts or so: a contortionist, a black face comedian, a singing soubrette, a solo dancer and a troupe, acrobats and a ventriloquist, and a very strong, sensational sketch to head the bill. Then Vera Montmorency turned up with her sister. You'll meet the sister tonight. Alice, otherwise Mrs. Turner, two years older than Mary—widow without encumbrance and with a small—a very small—income. They explained that Mary—I mean Vera—wanted to do male impersonations *à la* Vesta Tilley. She had never done anything professionally, but had the clothes and the songs—and the nerve. I had a few minutes to fill in the program, but it was so obvious that they did not belong in the business that I refused to do anything until I knew the story.

"Their father had been a man of good family, who had become involved as a director in some bankrupt company and had shot himself—too late to save his reputation or his daughters' fortune. The mother had been dead some years. Mrs. Turner's husband had died a few months before, and the income he had left her could by no means be made sufficient for two. They wanted to be together, and there was the problem. The stage suggested itself as a possibility. So they came up to town and Mary made up her mind to go ahead. She found a man to write her some songs and started out to look for engagements. I think she was a little lucky to strike me first. Anyway, I engaged her, at a very small salary, it is true, but, as her sister would be traveling with her and paying her own expenses, it would not be so bad."

"Didn't you want to see what she could do?" asked Webster.

"Yes, I got her to give me a private show and found she was hopeless—absolutely hopeless. I told her so, but—Here we are! Let's go out on the terrace; we've twenty minutes yet."

They passed through the smoking room, almost deserted at this hour, and found a couple of chairs in a corner of the broad terrace. At their left was Charing Cross Bridge with its changing multitude of red and green lamps and a never resting crossing of trains. To the west were the lights of Westminster, with the lantern telling of a late sitting of the House shining high above the dial of Big Ben. In front were the Embankment Gardens and beyond them the river, silent save for the churning of an occasional tug or the sharper rush of a launch.

For a few minutes the two smoked in silence; then the journalist went on.

"I told her she was no good, but she could not see that that was final. So I decided to let her find it out for herself on the road. Then there was always the chance of finding something that she could do—if only by accident. And the accident occurred.

"We were to open at a small town in the Midlands on Whit Monday. I went down on the Wednesday before and Mary and her sister came down Thursday morning.

"When I had seen them settled in a quiet house close to the theater we got to work at once. She was a stick—and a very wooden stick, at that. She seemed incapable of seeing what I wanted, and at last I gave up and told her we would trust to luck. She did not seem at all worried at the prospect, but was quite sure that I was wrong. In fact, I think she was a little sorry for me.

"We saw a good deal of each other in the course of the next day or two. In the evenings I went around to their rooms and we talked till bedtime. Incidentally, I learned that Mary was more or less engaged to a lieutenant of dragoons, who, having no money and

very thin prospects, had gone out to India with his corps. They corresponded—intermittently. The thing I liked most about the two girls was their boundless optimism. Even the possibility that the line Mary had chosen to start in was an impossible one did not seem to cause them any anxiety as to their ultimate success.

"Sunday afternoon the others began to arrive. Among the first was Sydney Fitzgerald, the sketch man, in great distress about his scenery. He had sent it all by freight from North Wales, where he had just closed. He had forgotten all about its being Bank Holiday and the natural effect on the freight trains.

"We were to open at eight on Monday and I got down to the theater early for a final look around. Still no scenery. Fitzgerald in despair and cursing over the telephone. About half past seven word came that the car was expected in a few minutes, and that they had wagons waiting at the station to rush the stuff down to the theater.

"By opening time showers were falling, and the house was filling nicely. The band opened the program, of course, and was guyed and cheered by the audience, it being one of the standing jokes of the town. Then came Miss Montmorency, as cool as a cucumber. Her work was just as I had known it would be—no worse, no better—but she looked well, and that was enough for a holiday crowd. The rest went along very smoothly for an opening show, and everybody was pleased. But nine o'clock came and still there was no scenery.

"At half past Fitzgerald came up to me and dropped into a chair. 'Tomorrow morning,' he gasped.

"'Cheerful,' I replied. 'Your turn is due at ten-fifteen this evening. Any suggestions?'

"'No.'

"'Good Lord, man, haven't you anything you can fake?'

"'No—yes—Wait! No, that wouldn't do. If I only had another woman!'

"'How about your wife?'

"I shall have to use her, anyway—though she'll hate to work without her stage frock. But I want a heavy woman. We could do all the rest."

"What do you want her to do?"

"Oh, three lines and a death struggle—more if she can fatten it up."

"I was looking for Mary, whom I had seen standing in the wings watching the others—a habit she had never broken herself of, by the way—but she had gone to her dressing room. So I went up and knocked.

"Can you do three lines and a death struggle?" I called through the door.

"Do what?"

"Three lines and a death struggle. Fitzgerald's stuff has not turned up, and we've got to fake a sketch."

"Tell me," she said, "do you want me to do this? I mean—will it help you—or only Fitzgerald?"

"It will help me a whole lot," I replied.

"All right; I'll do it. This is going to be a lark!" The optimistic point of view was, of course, the only one she could take.

"It was very evident that Mary was the least nervous of the whole company. She was not on till the end, although she was spoken of constantly. So she stood in the wings watching the others, and I got my first idea as to her method. At that time it was, of course, not a method but merely an instinct, but subsequent developments have proved that her instinct had shown her the one possible way for her. All that she was intent on was the 'note' of the sketch—a not badly written, rather lurid little thing—and, once she caught that, nothing else mattered. Her part came in the second scene of the sketch. She was to be taken from her bed by four men in an attempt to abduct her. There was to be a more or less terrific struggle—the more or less depending entirely on the ability of the actress playing the part—and at the end she was to be victorious, only to die on the empty stage.

"The abduction started in according to the book, but, as Mary woke up to what was going on she let herself out.

She forgot—or disregarded—everything she had been told except that she was to fall on the bed and then roll or slide off. She died according to her own ideas of dying, and the audience went wild."

"Is that the half-hour?" asked Webster, as Big Ben boomed out.

"By George, it is!" said the journalist. "We'll take a hansom and I can tell you the rest on the way. We can do it easily enough; it's only up by Regent's Park."

In ten minutes they were bowling along through Trafalgar Square on their way northward. The journalist picked up the thread of his story without delay.

"When we left that town at the end of the week we went on to another just like it and did good business. We were out altogether six weeks, playing a new town each week, and during that time the girls and I became very friendly. It was soon Mary and Alice and Jim; in fact, I was adopted as a sort of elder brother, which was very pleasant.

"I wrote to a manager whom I knew, asking him to come down to see a new heavy woman. I said nothing to Mary, but told her sister that I wanted the two of them to come to supper with me at the hotel. The manager was delighted with the sketch, and I could see that Mary had made a hit. I knew he had a play for the autumn, which would be just the right opening. It appealed to Mary and we closed with him—and Mary was launched.

"When we got back to town I set Mary to work to study elocution, fencing and things of that kind. She took to the whole bag of tricks as a duck takes to water, but she could not learn the first thing about the art of acting. She could not see that there was anything to learn, any rules or laws or principles—or even any art. Either she could see a part—or she couldn't. And in reading plays with her I found that certain parts—some of them good parts, too—were absolutely meaningless to her. She worked hard till the end of July and then went away until rehearsals began in September.

"When she came back to town she knew her part well. They had sent her the skeleton part first, but, as she could make nothing of that, I got the book for her. And when she came on at the first rehearsal she was already right in the picture. Except for a little more familiarity with the other parts, she was no better at the end of rehearsals than on the first day—but nearly every other day she had some new piece of business to put in. Sometimes a suggestion would be made to her, but there was no telling whether she would be able to carry it out or not. Usually not—she was at her best when allowed to work things out in her own way.

"The piece was a success from the start, and the critics were nice to her. In February they put on a new piece, giving her a fresh contract with better terms, and in rehearsing this there was the same experience as with the first one—she had to get her idea by herself. The following autumn trouble began. There was another piece with practically the same company for the opening of the season, but the part intended for Mary did not appeal to her—and she could not play it. She could not be made to undertake it—nor to understand it—nor even to see anything in it. They found another woman for the part, paying Mary's salary just the same, but the piece did not go and was very soon taken off. They tried another new piece, reviving one of the former ones while rehearsals were going on, and that had the same fate—as far as Mary was concerned. In January they found a third piece to suit her, and all went well again. She got a new contract for the autumn with an increased salary once more; and in the autumn history repeated itself.

"At last the manager got tired of the game and let her out. She had been saving all the time and immediately got her own company together and started to run things herself, as she has been doing for the last three years. She does better alone than would have been expected, simply because she will not attempt a play unless she really

feels it, and when she does feel it it is bound to go. Her people all like her and are ready to do anything for her, but she is a sore trial to them, as they never know just what mood she is going to be in. And her conception of the part she is playing—and what she does with the part—depends entirely on her mood. She introduces new business on the spur of the moment and trusts to the others to catch the idea. If they do, all is well; if not— The real trouble is that she can't act. Some day I shall tell her so. Perhaps tonight. And here is where I get my surprise."

As he spoke, the cab turned into a side street and stopped at a small house with a garden. A neat maid admitted them, and while they were removing their coats Miss Leigh and her sister came out to greet them.

"You are in good time," said Mary. Leaving the lawyer with Alice, she took Jim by the arm and hurried him up the stairs. At the door of the drawing-room she paused. "Prepare for the first surprise!" she said dramatically, then opened the door. A very tall man of about thirty-three years, with a face the color of an old saddle, against which a sun-bleached mustache stood out in startling contrast, turned from an inspection of the photographs on the mantelpiece to meet them.

"Fred, this is Jim!" said Miss Leigh breathlessly.

The two men eyed each other gravely for an instant, then advanced and shook hands.

"I think I know who you are," said Jim with a twinkle in his eye; "but you will admit that Mary's information is somewhat lacking in detail."

"Wilmot, K.D.G.," said the tall man.

"Barron, free lance," returned Jim. "And I don't think there's any need to trouble about the rest. So you've come home at last!"

"Yes."

"To stay?"

"Yes. People dead, estates mine and so on."

"I see. Glad of it. And glad to see you," said Jim. And the two shook hands again.

Miss Leigh had been standing by, looking from one to the other with the expression of a child showing off a new toy. "That's very nice," she said in a tone of complete satisfaction. "Now come down to supper."

They went down the stairs and into the dining room. In the doorway Wilmot stopped short, the expression of blank surprise on his face only equaled by that on the face of Webster. Then the two met in the middle of the room, the way in which their hands gripped showing conclusively that there was no need of introductions in their case.

"Fred!"

"Dick!"

"And that's very nice!" said Jim, echoing Mary's phrase. "But what does it mean?"

"Fred was my fag at Harrow," replied Webster. "When did you get home?"

"Day before yesterday."

"It's good to see you again, isn't it, Miss Leigh?" turning to Mary. "And he's as talkative as ever—even a little more so, perhaps. Or haven't you noticed? Anyway, there's no doubt about his strength," he continued, examining his fingers a little ruefully.

"Come now, good people," said Mary, "I'm starving. Alice, take care of Mr. Webster. I'm going to sit between Fred and Jim."

They took their places as directed, Alice whispering to the journalist as she passed him: "I like your friend, Jim."

"You may have him," he whispered back, for which impertinence she promptly and properly pulled his ear.

The meal was a little silent at first, all showing very healthy appetites except perhaps the journalist, who, while not neglecting his plate, yet found a little more time to observe the others. He felt just a little lonely as he noticed that Webster was very evidently inclined to return Alice's liking, and that Mary and Wilmot had no particular need of anything or anybody beside each other. He liked the look of the soldier, whose steady blue eyes spoke of good, sterling qualities. Moreover, his work in India and the Soudan was a

matter of record, and altogether Jim felt that Mary's happiness was as certain as is possible in human affairs. Presently Wilmot caught the journalist's glance fixed on him, and with a smile raised his glass and emptied it in silence. Mary noticed the action and nodded friendly approval.

"So you were the girl, Miss Leigh?" said Webster.

"What girl?" asked Mary.

"Fred's girl. We all knew there was a girl, but nobody knew who she was, as he never told her name or showed her portrait."

"Nice boy," said Mary, patting Wilmot's hand.

"He wouldn't," said Jim under his breath. "When do you leave the stage, Mary?"

"Jim," exclaimed Mary, "how dare you? That was my second surprise. How did you know?"

"My dear girl, can't one know things without being told? That surprise went with the other. In fact, the two are only one."

"I suppose you're right, but I think you might have let me tell you myself. I shall finish with the run of the piece. It can't last long, as the season is so nearly over, and meanwhile Fred will be busy with his lawyers. Then we shall have a very quiet affair somewhere and—I shall simply not come back after the summer. Don't you think that will be the best way?"

"Quite unprofessional—but best," answered Jim.

"Won't you be sorry to give up acting, Miss Leigh?" asked Webster.

"Mary can't give up acting," said Jim before she could reply. "Because she never has acted and has never been able to act. She—"

"Jim! You brute!" cried Mary.

"I have always promised myself," began Jim, "that some day I should tell you this, and now seems to be the fitting time. You have a very capable champion at your side, so you have things in your own hands. You have never known anything about the art or the technique of acting, and you know very well that you have never been able

to learn anything about them. To the public—who also knows nothing—you seem to have improved, simply because you have acquired the habit of the stage. But you never knew what ought to be done, nor why nor how it ought to be done. If you had known, you could have made a success in the first line you tried—thank God, you didn't!—or any other line. You have just let the parts that appealed to you take hold of you—and play themselves. You remember your second season, when you had to give up two parts because you could not see them? It is true they were not good parts, but an actress who knew her business could have made something out of them—merely by knowing how to act. You have—”

“Wait a minute, Jim,” broke in Webster. “Is not that natural acting, from the heart, a very much higher form of art than the style that is a matter of calculation and drill?”

“It would be if a play were to be done once only. But plays are not produced for single performances, and the actor who forms his idea of a part that way must have his technique and his stage craft to back him up and help him to fix the impression and reproduce it. Mary gets a good start, and her first idea is true, but then she lets her moods and fancies run away with her, and neither she nor anyone else knows what will come next. Take the ending of the third act this evening; it was a perfect way of leaving a letter to be discovered, but I'll swear that Mary invented it by accident, and probably doesn't even know how good it is. Tomorrow or next week she will do it some other way, and some of the people will not notice, and there will be a mix-up.

“Again, Mary allows herself to be dominated by her moods, and moods may not be indulged in in art unless

they go with other qualities. They are for the great actor or the great musician, whose command of technique has become automatic and whose personality is so strong that the audience is affected by and brought into immediate sympathy with the mood of the moment. But in the lesser artist moods are merely an excuse for ignorance and slovenly work. It is the same as with intuition and reason; either will work well alone, or both at their highest development—if one could get such a combination—would work well together, but a touch of either is always fatal to the work of the other. Mary's success has been due to her personality and to the fact that, owing to her having no other great interests, her moods have kept true to her parts. And such a success is always precarious. I am glad the success has been so great and—I am very glad it is safely over.”

They were all silent for a moment, looking at Mary, who sat with her chin on her hands, her eyes wide open, but seeing nothing. She straightened up in her chair and held out her hand to Jim with a smile. “Thank you, Jim,” she said quietly. “I think I'm glad you told me. And I know I'm glad you didn't tell me before.”

“Jim is quite right,” said Alice. “I have known and felt it all along. But he was doing so much for us that I felt sure he would step in in time if there were danger in any way, and so neither of us has ever had to worry.”

“Thank you, Alice,” said Mary. “And now—shall we go upstairs?”

“One moment,” said Wilmot, filling the glasses. He rose, glass in hand. “To Jim!” he said.

“To Jim!” echoed the others standing, the two women behind Jim, each with a hand on his shoulder.

And for once the journalist had nothing to say.



A STITCH in time is the rarest work of woman.

MUTTERINGS OF A MERE MAN

By HENRY McHARG DAVENPORT

WHEN a woman says sweet things about you she is giving her can-died opinion.

When women get their rights most of us will get left.

Beware of the woman who is so stingy that she won't even tell a joke at her own expense.

The bravest of men sometimes get frights on their wedding day.

The girl who is a good listener is the one who hears the most proposals.



THE OASIS OF LOVE

THE Mind's eye shows us love as the oasis in the Sahara of life; so, together, two set out to seek the haven of rest in the great journey. But, as the travelers approach, their paradise recedes; in just such measure as the pilgrims hasten, their Mecca retreats. Love is a witching chimera—life's most beautiful optical illusion.



WHY do we labor in this world? The attainable nobody wants; the unattainable nobody can have.

BIRDS of a feather flock together after they find it impossible to fly with those of more luxuriant plumage.

THHERE is nothing like the clutch of conventionality for squeezing the breath out of individuality.

IN THE SQUARE

By ANNIE E. P. SEARING

THE diffused light of a smoke-veiled sun came through the yellowing leaves of early autumn. The fountain tossed up spasmodic geysers, and a woman in black stood watching the plashing drops where sparrows fussed and chattered in the sudden showers. It was a pretty play, but it hardly seemed to justify the fixity of her attention. She turned away at last and came and sat down on one of the benches. A seedy-looking man at once got up and slouched away as if in shamefaced recognition of her dainty difference. This seemed to waken her for a moment out of her absorption, and she laughed a little under her breath with a touch of bitterness.

"He need not have moved," she said to herself. "We are already seated together—on life's back seat!"

She was a slim creature, with dark hair graying about the temples, and that gift of the gods, the air of distinction, which the wardrobe of a queen or the beauty of the angels are alike powerless to supply. She had the habit of the high held head and eyes that looked out straight and fearless. They were gazing now along the golden tunnel of shade toward the soft recurrent splash of the water. But nothing of all that was there did they see.

What they saw was defeat, disaster, the End of Things!

Along the vista of twenty years they reviewed the events that had molded this present catastrophe, inspected each disastrous blunder, every mistaken judgment, while she sat as detached and impersonal as an audience in front of a panorama of moving pictures. She seemed to realize, as she looked, with

impartial clearness of vision, that it was years and years since she had felt any other relation to it all than that feeling of utter detachment.

The puppet on the stage of the drama was herself, but always a puppet, a projection. The real woman had ever as now sat apart and pulled the strings, applauding a little at rare intervals, or condemning as mercilessly as any paid critic on space work. Far away in the distant end of the purview she saw the manikin with its toys in a childhood as grotesque as a fairy tale—the life in foreign cities, the setting of old romances lived again in a little heart where "let's pretend" made a defense of imagined companionship against utter loneliness. She saw the puppet in a procession of white-robed figures in a cathedral marriage. She saw Eric, poor, weak, foolish Lord Eric, and wondered, as a wave of pity swept over her, if ever once the puppet had really loved him. It was some satisfaction, sitting among the final wreckage, to reflect that, however that might be, the strings had been pulled true to the last, and her paltry part at least played fairly. Eric was borne with patiently to the end. His only saving grace, his love for his wife, was the one force that was in him and served to condone much.

As the manikin in that early drama she reviewed was ever carrying in her arms the doll of childhood, she saw it take up the substitute of maturer years, the weakling husband, who was equally mothered and protected to the end. It was a pitiful pageant to look back upon, touched with squalor, with vice and with splendor, all in a kind of mad

mirage, and the puppet, out of the great loneliness of a continual crowd, always dragging about the unloved doll. She made for herself a fantastic picture of that figure in her movements through the tinsel Continental world, trailing court robes, wearing the coronet of a countess and dangling a great rag doll. But it was all over now with poor old Eric—she had stood by him till she closed his eyes in the last sleep, paid his debts and left him in the tomb of his fathers, while she came back to her own country to face the world alone and penniless.

Other men had tried to make love to her—that was perhaps inevitable in the life they had lived, and she had dallied here and there to trifle a little with such toys, but on the whole she had played fair. She had taken her husband's love, the best he had to give, and in return had given what she had, patience, cheerful companionship and outward loyalty. Once, only once, had she wavered, and even now she flushed rosy red at the memory, she could not tell whether with joy or chagrin. She saw again with microscopic vision the setting of that distant scene, the moonlight sifting through the vines of a pergola, the shine on the water below the terrace, and once more she heard the words of that jasmine scented night.

"It is of no use to urge me," the puppet was saying. "I have played a part too long. I should always be posing. You could never be sure of me. I should never be sure of myself!"

"For God's sake, come away and leave it all! Have done at last with these shams and be true to your own nature!"

"I haven't any—it has all gone into the part. I am what I seem—a tinsel humbug. Now, good-bye, and go—it is final!"

She shivered to remember the rough embrace, the fierce, contemptuous words of that good-bye—but it was final indeed. Was it ten years ago? Or ten hundred? It was the same. Everything was over and done with. She was alone now; the pageant was

past, and so was all the show, the underlying squalor of the gambling and drink, the sin and repentance, the laughter and tears—all over and done with, and she was free to be herself. The manikin need play no more on the mimic stage; the strings could drop from her weary fingers. There was now confronting her the bread problem, for the only fence that stood between her and the wolf was a few hundred dollars in the bank, but she made up her mind that the flimsy barrier should come down only stick by stick, as slowly as possible. So out from the little town where she was known, and where least of all could she tell of her depleted purse, she had now set forth to seek the saddest of all fortunes, the first enforced earnings of a woman no longer young. This morning she had met with a shock of self-revelation. "Of course, for young women there are many more openings, but to one approaching middle age—" Here on the tramp's abandoned bench, with the unhurried leisure of the Great Unemployed, she was groping about in a new world with an entirely new point of view as to time past, time present and time to come. "Approaching middle age!"

There was something in the witchery of the pale light which brought back that moonlight under the pergola—or was it the splash of the fountain that made rhythmic reminder of the one that tinkled an accompaniment to that distant scene? There was an influence in the air that vaguely irritated her, it was so out of tune with her present practical dilemma. What had romance and moonlight and the poignancy of frustrated passions to do with "approaching middle age"?

From the focal point of the shaded path a man was coming toward her, tall, with a loosely swinging gait and a slight stoop of the shoulders. Had those pictures she had been mentally leafing over played tricks with her bodily eyes, or in some occult manner had they materialized before her face? She sat breathless and still as she saw him come, his head down, absorbed in

thought. She said to herself that if he passed on so, unseeing, she would make no sign, but if he chanced to look up—kismet!

He came quite near before he saw her, and then he stopped and stood gravely regarding her. Without a word they looked into each other's eyes. With the intuition of his professional habit he seemed to divine the end of her pitiful drama, as his words betrayed when he spoke.

"When did it happen?" he said, and as she told him he still kept that air of half absorbed aloofness. Presently he sat down beside her, took off his hat and pushed back his rumpled hair.

"Why are you here?"

His voice was not ungentle, but she was conscious of the barrier of his old contempt. He felt that she had finished her mess of pottage. No perception of her true sacrifice had ever penetrated him. In his scorn of the conventions of her situation, he had thought of her as a sordid slave to material things, who dared not pay the price of freedom. Divining his thought, she drew away with proud indifference, laughing softly as she waved her hand toward the adjacent seats.

"Like these my brothers I am down on my luck—out of a job."

She told her little story without preface or apology, not keeping back even the rebuff of the morning, and he listened in silence. Through all the years that stretched between them, nothing had ever obliterated that sweet persuasive personality of hers that was to his spirit like a delicate perfume to the senses. The suffocation of it was upon him now, but he battled against it with his will and his reason, until the marks of the strife wrote themselves in the fierce hardening of his face. She had chosen the baser part to remain true to her idols; let her alone! He would not, he told himself, passionately insistent, yield to the temptation of her nearness or her freedom. Help her, of course—but there should be no mistaking his attitude toward her.

"Would you 't' e work from me?" His tone was sternly expressionless.

"Why not from you—or anyone, if it were work I could do?"

"Not easy work, mind you. I want a nurse; not a trained one—a mere attendant. She must be strong, patient, obedient, cheerful. It will be a tedious case; a patient of mine, with a disease hitherto regarded as incurable, has submitted herself to the test of a serum I am now experimenting with. It would be very hard work, but nothing you could not do if you would—only there could be no turning back."

"I will do it," she said at once. "If you can trust me I will take the case, and whether I have been right or wrong so far, I at least have never turned back."

"No," he made answer grimly, "you have not—certainly you have not done that!"

In the long months that followed, the woman who would not turn back had ample opportunity to demonstrate the qualities demanded of her. Through the nights and fever-haunted days every resource of body and soul was drawn upon to the utmost to help in the battle for life. When spring came up from the south, victory perched on the banners of the little army and they sang the song of triumph over death, than which mortal knows no prouder strain.

Once more she met him in the same square where the graceful Giraldalike towers soar above like guardian shapes of beauty. In and out of the sick room day after day, doctor and nurse, they had pursued their mechanical relation, each wearing the professional mask. Today, off duty, they met again, like people of old habit coming into a new life, she pausing to rest in her daily walk, he passing that way in the hope of meeting her alone. She saw how the lines of fatigue had deepened in his face during the winter as he came and sat beside her, and together they listened and looked while the spring surged about them. The branches above had donned their pale green veils; the grass spread a new carpet of a freshness direct from nature's dye pots; the crocus beds were afire in the midst and the

sparrows danced delirious in the spatter of the fountain. Everything seemed tuned to that key of joy except the tired man; his haggard face drooped in thought. At last he spoke, but without looking at her—as if to himself.

"What an ass a man can be!" he said. "What a purblind, egregious ass! He spends the best years of life in study, and all he gets out of it is a kind of meager formula that two and two make four. When it's too late he wakes up to the knowledge that a whole world of experience undreamed of in the philosophy of mathematicians lies outside his ken."

She laughed at him gently.

"Your man just lacks the essential factor of imagination. When he gets that he knows that two and two often make five, or seven, or at times even fail to total up more than three!"

He groaned as he smiled grimly.

"I suppose so, but we go on applying our formulas to life, and then when age is beckoning we begin to see, as I do now, how false and abominable our accursed little dogma is. My God, when I think how I misjudged you! I despised you all those years as playing a part, a miserable, sordid part, just to be able to stay in the eye of the world!"

"Well I was," she answered him. "Just pulling the strings of a puppet self! I didn't do it because I liked it, but in all the years I have never been able to be my own true self till now, when I can forget myself. There has been no time for part playing this winter!"

"Ah!" He caught his breath fiercely. "If I might ever hope to play my part half so well as you did yours! Conceited fool that I was!"

The birds set up a sudden clamoring quarrel over some disputed householders' rights in sticks and straws, and a fluttering rush of wings swept up to their very feet. She took an obvious and childlike pleasure in their shrill fracas, flushing and dimpling over it as she watched them on the path, while he in turn hungrily watched her.

"I suppose," he said, as if in re-

sumption of some former discussion, "there is no going back, no retrieving the years, and I must take your answer as final? I confess I had hoped a little during these months we have worked together—but I have not deserved you! You do not forgive me!"

"Oh, it is not that, believe me! I have nothing—nothing to forgive! But can't you understand—can't you use that newly found imagination of yours? All my life I have never owned myself. I have always been only a factor in someone else's life and happiness. If it were a part, it took all that was best and strongest within me to play it. I spent my vital forces in it, and my new freedom to be myself is very, very sweet. I have found myself, and I want to get used to her—it may be that I shall tire of her and get very lonely—be very glad of you!" Her voice dropped, and as the man looked up suddenly to meet her eyes, her gaze fell and she flushed hotly, hurrying on with her words.

"We are going abroad for the summer, you know—my patient and I. I wish that life could stand still for a while—one needs to think, you know, after so many years of an atrophy of heart. We are going to Como, to the Villa Asti at Como."

There was silence between them for a long moment, a loud, insistent silence that clamored with things remembered and things that could not be voiced. "To Como—the Villa Asti and Como!" Hope came shining down the ways of time once more, and the man straightened his shoulders with a deep drawn breath. Then he reached out and gathered in his her hand where it rested beside her.

"I shall be there," he said.

But she shrank away a little, and her voice, as she answered him, had in it almost a cry of fear—fear of herself, of him, of the future. "I do not know—I cannot tell how it will be! You must ask nothing—expect nothing!"

"I shall be there," he said with finality, "and I shall expect nothing—or everything!"

LA MÉGÈRE APPRIVOISÉE

Par GEORGES COURTELINE

COMME une soirée passée au Vaudeville, où une troupe américaine donnait des représentations de la *Mégère apprivoisée*, avait amené la causerie sur la méchanceté des femmes, Bobo se révéla singulièrement expert en l'art de dompter les belles fauves et de mettre à la raison les dames qui ont besoin de ça.

Nous sommes d'abord combien la femme de Bobo avait reçu de la Providence le rare don d'être insupportable; mais insupportable toujours! sans jamais une interruption! dans toutes les circonstances, quelles qu'elles fussent, de la vie! . . . Elle était de celles qui, le coude dans l'oreiller et la lampe sur la table de nuit, attendent jusqu'à des deux ou trois heures du matin le retour du mari attardé au café à y lamper innocemment des bocks en compagnie de camarades, saluent sa craintive rentrée d'un "Bonsoir" donné à bouche close, et pendant huit jours restent muettes, avec des yeux de panthères traquées et des visages cabossés de reproches. Elle avait des rancunes! . . .

Bobo expliqua:

— Très forte pour le chi-chi, ne détestant pas le scandale, elle ne se fait aucun scrupule de me traiter de maquereau à haute et intelligible voix, de façon que nul n'en ignore et que je jouisse, dans l'esprit des voisins, d'une déplorable renommée—ce qui est fait. Deux ou trois fois, exaspéré, j'ai feint de vouloir prendre la porte et de sauter sur mon chapeau; mais toujours, dans le même instant, elle avait sauté sur la fenêtre et elle l'avait toute grande ouverte, en m'avisant qu'elle serait avant moi dans la rue—chose qu'elle eût faite sans l'ombre d'une hésitation, étant femme à payer de sa

peau le plaisir de me gâcher ma vie en fourrant un remords dedans. Ah! le chameau! . . . Toutes les vertus, avec ça, économique, femme d'intérieur, sobre!

Puis, les mains au ciel:

— Et menteuse! Quelle existence!

Nous nous amusions franchement.

C'était un bon gros ingénue, à la face réjouie de silène, que paraissait avoir lentement enluminée le reflet de nombreux bitters bus aux terrasses des brasseries.

Rêveur un instant, il reprit:

— Non, on ne saurait se faire une idée du degré auquel elle atteint, de rosserie et de méchanceté. Tenez, un exemple, dans le tas. Un soir que nous étions allés au spectacle et que nous en revenions à pied, par les boulevards, nous eûmes un petit différend touchant la soi-disante ressemblance de Mme. Simon-Girard avec une vieille dame bossue qui vient dîner chez nous le dimanche. C'était tellement extravagant que je ne m'attardai même pas à discuter et que je m'en tins, ce qu'eût fait à ma place n'importe lequel d'entre vous, à ce haussement d'épaules qui tranche la question. Très bien; que fit alors ma femme, messieurs?

— Ah! c'est comme ça, fit-elle; eh bien, regarde!

Et là-dessus, lâchant mon bras, ne voilà-t-il pas qu'elle se couche en travers de la chaussée! . . .

Nous nous exclamâmes:

— Tu dis?

— Je dis, poursuivit Bobo, qu'elle s'étendit sur le dos, dans la boue, montrant à Dieu et aux hommes un visage faussement résigné, un sourire doux et plaintif de victime martyrisée, à ce point exaspérant que c'était à l'écran

bouiller sous une avalanche de pierres! Vous voyez ma position. Des gens accouraient de toutes parts, qui regardaient sans comprendre, et dont, je sentais se couler vers moi les coups d'œil assombris de méfiance. Je la suppliai, éperdu:

— Adèle, voyons, relève-toi! Tu nous couvres de ridicule!

Mais elle, implacable et sereine, hochait doucement de droite à gauche sa face aux fines lèvres pincées, d'une obstination de forcenée. A la fin (car de la Bastille à la Madeleine, les énormes omnibus, arrêtés à queue-leu-leu, immobilisaient sur place le clair grenat de leurs lanternes), force me fut de mettre les pouces et de convenir, la dextre ouverte sur le sein gauche, qu'entre la vieille dame bossue et Mme. Simon-Girard la ressemblance était tellement extraordinaire que, les rencontrant dans la rue, je ne les eusse pu distinguer l'une de l'autre! . . . Oui, voilà ce que je dus confesser, ajoutant que pour avoir pu une minute mettre en doute tant d'évidence il fallait véritablement que j'eusse été frappé d'aberration mentale. Aux rires goguenards de la foule, je proclamai, pâle de rage, ces diverses monstruosités; seulement, une fois chez nous, nous eûmes, madame et moi, une petite conversation, et madame reçut un soufflet.

Quand je dis un soufflet, je me trompe. Elle reçut un peu moins qu'une confirmation: l'effleurement, sensible à peine, d'une gifle lancée mollement et de trop loin. N'importe; d'abord stupéfaite:

— Oh! fit-elle.— A l'assassin! A l'assassin!

Et, en moins de temps qu'il n'en faut pour le dire, toute la maison, révolutionnée, s'éveilla; et non seulement la maison, mais la rue, qu'emplissaient maintenant de vagues rumeurs mêlées à des grincements aigres d'espagnollettes. C'était le scandale dans toute son horreur, l'affreux scandale auquel rien ne manque, ni les coups sourds au plafond, ni les clamours des voisins, qui, penchés par-dessus la rampe, appellent dans les échos sonores de l'escalier: "Concierge! . . . Concierge! . . . Con-

cierge! . . ." Mais ma gueuse ne se lassait pas. Elle hurlait éperdument, avec, seulement, de temps en temps, des accalmies suffoquées où sa méchanceté puisait de nouvelles forces. En même temps, la main sur sa joue—cette joue que je n'avais pas meurtrie! . . . — elle battait les murs de la pièce, qui se la renvoyaient l'un à l'autre comme une toupie hollandaise. Je sentis que nulle force humaine ne serait capable de faire taire cette abominable créature, et, affolé, j'allais me procurer coûte que coûte son silence, quand soudain une idée géniale m'illumina.

Je sortis, je gagnai la cuisine d'où je revins une minute plus tard, un seau plein d'eau à la main.

— Oui ou non, veux-tu te taire, Adèle? demandai-je.

Adèle redoubla de braillements.

— Tu ne veux pas? C'est bien entendu?

Elle:— A l'assassin! Au meurtre! Je n'hésitai plus.

— Très bien, dis-je.

Et au même instant, de mes deux mains, je lançai le contenu du seau, à toute volée. A travers la chambre à coucher, la trombe se développa en forme d'éventail, puis retomba en faisant: Pouf! . . .

— Oh! fit Adèle.

Ce fut le dernier cri de la bête. Quand elle eut vu pisser l'eau autour d'elle, ses meubles soie et coton, et son lit d'où coulait une nappe, et les franges de sa garniture de cheminée devenues telles que des stalactites, et le chat fuyant terrifié, dans le désastre, avec une queue que l'inondation avait allongée d'un demi-mètre: ah! mes enfants! ah! mes enfants! . . . Une seconde! . . . et déjà elle était à genoux, un torchon dans une main, une éponge dans l'autre, épongeant ici, séchant là, et bien trop occupée à opérer le sauvetage de son petit bien pour songer à autre chose.

La ménagère avait dompté la mégère.

Il y en eut pour une grande heure, après quoi:

— Maintenant, lui dis-je, tu vas changer les draps du lit. Et si tu as le malheur de dire un mot (un mot, un seul mot, je fiche le feu à l'armoire à glace!

THE DRAMA BEHAVES ITSELF

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

IT was about this time last year that the drama, after a period of continence, began showing unmistakable signs of restlessness. And it was not long afterward that the drama began to get so naughty that, when Miladi went to the theater she had to fortify her cheeks with a chalky, Nazi-movable application of powder which would defy even the most persistent blush. Powder, you know, may cover a multitudinous confession of longed-for sins—for blushes are the way to a woman's heart.

To adapt the words of Torelli, when the drama is good it is very good, and when it is bad, it is very, very good—from the standpoint of a certain element of theatergoers who are addicted dramatically to great white waywardness. But the others, the larger body of playhouse patrons, who, while appreciating full well that the sex problem is not limited to sextettes, do not care to spend two dollars every time a playwright has discovered a new excuse for the woman, are of a different opinion. So, last year, when the drama sought its ideas in the lobster Louvres, when it gaypareed its atmosphere and lured its destitute ladies to comfort and ruin through wicked stockbrokers and Martin's *table d'hôtes*, it was but natural that Madame Yale should have given her college yell and laid in an extra supply of *poudre blanche*.

As I suggested last month, the drama at the beginning of the current season began again to exhibit signs of being up to its old naughty tricks, but the speedy repeal of "The Only Law" and the arresting of the career of "The Revellers" has since taught it to be

good. In these two cases, the bad drama was spanked where it hurt most—on the box office—and the punishment was not long in showing its effect. During the month just passed, further chastisement was inflicted when the drama gave a slight evidence of slipping its traces with a play called "A CITIZEN'S HOME," a work that bore the same relation and resemblance to the drama that a Harlem citizen's flat bears to a Fifth Avenue citizen's residence.—Oh, yes, both are homes, to be sure, dear, soft-hearted reader, but it is a long way from one to the other.—The sending of the play in question into a dark corner after a short run was the last effective lesson to the belated kind of drama that practises vice while it preaches.

The cold, gray dawn of the morning after the failure of the plays with a woman, instead of a skeleton, hidden in a closet, finds the drama turning over a new leaf. It has repented, reformed. It has been weaned away from the Tenderloin and, for the time being, at least, has become a church-goer. In testimony whereof are the words of the Reverend Sydney N. Ussher, of St. Bartholomew's, delivered from the pulpit a few weeks ago:

The stage is now returning to its first love, when it took the Bible as its text. In many theaters in New York the actors are presenting sermons six nights a week. The stage is the weekday pulpit.

O tempora, O morass—how quick the draining of the immoral dramatic swamp! The drama has got religion. Will the contribution box, I wonder, reveal sufficient funds to warrant no

backsliding? The mission of the drama, obviously, is now up to the missionaries.

THE advent of the masterful Forbes-Robertson in Jerome K. Jerome's sanctified comedy, "THE PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR BACK," at the Maxine Elliott Theater, has induced the temporarily discouraged clientele of the latter playhouse to sing again: "I'm going back to Maxine's." For here is a play that, for sheer sweetness, delicacy and positively perfect enactment, has not been rivaled in New York. Its theme, because of its similarity to that employed by Charles Rann Kennedy in "The Servant in the House," has caused many to ascribe its origin to the latter, whereas, as a matter of fact, Mr. Jerome's conception of the subject antedates Mr. Kennedy's by fully a year. The play is divided into three parts, the prologue, the play and the epilogue, and the scenes are laid in a second cabin English boarding house. Here we find living eleven persons who are at loggerheads with themselves, each other and the world in general. They squabble, steal, cheat, argue, spit, bully, fight. They are snobs, liars, rogues, cads, in fact, everything one political candidate calls another just before election. Into this boiling chowder of clammy humanity, there comes a Passer-By, a calm, soft-voiced, gracious being who wishes to engage lodging quarters. The landlady, a born cheat, names a much higher price than her tiny vacant rear room is worth, but the Passer-By agrees to take it, saying the price is small enough and smiling away her description of the room being "just above the second floor."

In this way, by tolerance, kindness, sympathy and delicate flattery, the Third Floor Back, as he is subsequently called, brings out the best there is in each of the boarders, solves their difficulties for them and makes harmony prevail where chaos once was. His work done, he departs, and the curtain falls as through the darkness beyond the opened door there streams in slowly a flood of brilliant light. It is

quiet, impressive, compelling. It sends audiences out to their tables in the restaurants at peace with themselves, mankind and the waiters. It is thrice as effective as "The Servant in the House." It would reform a score of Laura Murdochs, and would, I am almost certain, have made the Girl from Rector's clamber down from her poster platter of "spicy salad with little dressing" out of sincere shame over the immodesty of her airy repartee gown.

There is one incident in the play that is a little drama all in itself. A vain, frivolous, painted, padded, false-haired woman of not youthful years seeks to exercise her waning wiles over the Third Floor Back, as she has attempted to do with the other lodgers. Gradually, by deft compliment to her real self, by suggesting to her that she need not resort to sham to be winsome and lovable, the Stranger makes the woman realize the shallowness of her physical and mental make-believe. She rushes from him in anger at the first crashing in of the realization, but she returns to him later, low-voiced and subdued, without her paint and pads and puffs and powder—just a plain, pathetic maiden lady, but with a simple soul beauty shining from her eyes, a beauty that belladonna had once hidden. If the cosmetic and coiffure shops would only hand out coupons to their women customers after the manner of the cigar stores, and if one of the coupons would only admit each woman to the theater in time for this scene! It would be a dangerous experiment for the beauty shops. They'd be turned into moving picture places the next day, I assure you.

In "THE PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR BACK," the central figure is not given the Christlike physical features, as in the instance of the Kennedy drama. The effect is not lessened, however; rather is it heightened by the finesse of subtle suggestion.

THE erstwhile religious movement in the drama had as its herald "THE WHITE SISTER," which crept into New

York in the late twilight of the previous month. The story of the play, to judge from the statistics of the sale of the Marion Crawford novel from which it was made, is sufficiently well known not to require a further chronicle why Sister Giovanna went into a convent, and why, after learning that her lover was not dead, after all, she began to wish that she had not done so. It must be confessed, however, that "*THE WHITE SISTER*," despite an interpretation by a highly efficient cast containing Viola Allen, James O'Neill, William Farnum, Minna Gale and Fanny Addison Pitt, is not as interesting as some of her scarlet sisters of the drama. (Cries of "Treason!")

The play is a riot of highly colored emotionalism, in which the primary dramatic shades are made to lose much of their individual saliency through bad mixing with the lesser and subsidiary colors. As a result, the general prevailing tone is a dark blue.

PASSING, for the time, comment on other plays reflecting the vogue of few subjects, it is to be noted that "*THE FOURTH ESTATE*" is a rather poor title for one of the best and most vitally interesting dramas of the last few seasons. In England, whence came the expression thus defining newspaper men's status, the title might have been an eminently satisfactory one, but in this country, where, I venture, probably not more than two-thirds of the newspaper men themselves know the significance of the phrase, the selection is unfortunate. In the theater, as in the marriages of our daughters, we Americans are somewhat partial to titles, but in this case, dramatic snobbery, if carried any further, would be unforgivable. For, back of the title, there is a great big theme, a theme every bit as solid and true as some of the slyly cautious newspaper reviewers have tried to lead outsiders to believe it is not, and the evolution of the theme is as unflinching and direct as captious criticisms have been evasive.

The play tells the story of a fearless young newspaper man, Wheeler Brand,

who, upon being made the managing editor of a great daily owned by a condensed milk and water journalistic invader, is subsequently asked by the proprietor to guide the columns away from the truth, so that the latter's social ambitions for his family may be gratified and the department store advertisements kept in. "Rot!" proclaimed some of the reviewers. "Such a state of affairs could never exist in a newspaper office." Dear, blind Utopians of Linotypeland! Have they forgotten the very first suggestion that the day city editor made to them 'way back in the dawn of their cub reporter days: "Remember, always remember, young man, to keep your eyes open"? I, personally, was careful to obey and, with those others who, too, listened to the words of their respective chiefs' advice, I kept them so wide open that I developed a bad case of journalistic astigmatism. You see, one often has to keep his eyes on the first news page and the last advertising page at the same time.

"*THE FOURTH ESTATE*" is the best newspaper play ever put on the stage. Its atmosphere is so penetratingly realistic that it makes one feel like putting on a verisimilitude overcoat. There is a scene in the office of the managing editor, in which the editors go over the news tally for the morning paper, that is so natural it caused a well known New York newspaper man in the audience on the second night to hurry out in search of a bracer. And the dialogue! "What other news is there?" asks McHenry of Downs, the city editor. "Well," replies the latter, "here's a story about another girl who has mysteriously disappeared from her home—been missing several days. May be in Jersey, though, with friends." "Um," grunts McHenry knowingly. "we'll pass that one; she's probably playing the suit case circuit somewhere." What newspaper reader does not recall a similar final solution of a lot of the "mysterious disappearance" sensations?

The play is splendidly acted. Charles Waldron as Brand; Thomas Findlay

as Nolan, the proprietor; Robert McWade, Jr., as McHenry; Tom Hadaway as the proprietor's son, who is always trying to get the photograph of his temporarily favorite chorus girl into the paper; Pauline Frederick as the daughter of the judge, the story of whose crookedness Brand, despite his love for the girl, is determined to print, and Alice Fischer, as Mrs. Nolan, merit particular notice. The scene in the last act showing the composing room of the *Advance* at the hour the edition is going to press, with its mechanical force, all members of the famous "Big Six," and with its rattling Mergenthaler linotype machines, presents a wonderfully realistic stage picture.

WITH a cast of characters containing such names as Alexei Nicholajevich, Petrovich, Vlasdor and Pavlovich, and with an entr'acte musical program in which were listed such appellations as Tobanyeff, Tchaikovsky and Gluika's Kamarinskaja, it might have been anticipated that the Russian revolutionary drama, "ON THE EVE," would be caviare to amusement seekers. Well, it was. They could not digest it. As one writer expressed it: "No dramatist has succeeded in working us up with a story of our own Revolutionary War; so it is difficult to see just how anyone is going to do the job with the Russian revolution." Somehow or other, we have heard so much for so long about the Russian revolution that we have come to regard it as the answer to the perpetual motion problem. Like the Tennysonian rippler, Czars may come and Czars may go, but the revolution goes on forever, and, cold and unsympathetic though it may seem, we are content to let it go on its uneven way so long as it does not go on the stage. Adapted melodramatically by Martha Morton from the German of Leopold Kampf, "ON THE EVE" proved to be a typical "cause" drama. One scene, however, in which four frisky *danseuses* started in to further asphalt "the easiest way" in no unmistakable manner, may be said to have had more to

do with the feminine condoning motive, "because." The play was staged in the excellent way Henry B. Harris has set as his own standard, and served to introduce to the English speaking stage the most recent of Nazimovas, Hedwig Reicher, an actress who some day will probably realize even more superlatively the superlative praise the critics have heaped upon her. The performance of Frederick Lewis in the role of Vassili was superb.

Harking back for a moment to our dramatic-religious premise, note the words of the Reverend Alexander Irvine, of the Church of the Ascension, in relation to the play: "I hope all that is divine and human will combine to keep this thrilling sermon on the New York stage." Alas, that New York audiences are not human! Of being at all divine, not even their worst enemies, nor Anna Held and Paul Potter, could accuse them.

"Bijou" is the French for jewel. The Bijou Theater, however, proved to be paste as far as two of its October offerings were concerned. One of these, an attempt to stage the atmosphere of Dickens with a play called "THE DEBTORS," in which Digby Bell and Kathleen Clifford appeared, missed fire sadly, despite a fair intrinsic quality of quaint charm. In view of the recent Polar controversy, Miss Clifford's advent into the drama was interesting chiefly because Broadway discovered her several years ago in a kicky musical concoction called "The Top o' the World." She did not have her Esquimaux along, however, to enable her to prove that she was an actress.

The other play, by Cosmo Hamilton, and entitled "THE MASTER KEY," should have deserved a better fate. There was so little freshness in its theme, though, so much of the seemingly inevitable prosaicism of stage love and labor clashes, that it failed to win sustained popular approval. The play resembled "The Battle" in several points and, as is usual to the type of drama in question, was not

without its Jack-of-all-tirades character. There was one speech, however, read by Frances Ring, in the role of the poor girl in love with the millionaire, that bears repeating:

If I were a millionaire, instead of giving the poor men, women and children lecture halls, reading rooms and museums, I would give them time to see the flowers growing in the fields, to feel the soft spray upon their lips and let the songs of the birds creep into their hearts. If I were a millionaire, I would bring smiles to my men's faces and cheerfulness to their children. I'd not think, with a glow of satisfaction, what good reading my will would make in the papers after my death; I'd make my will felt among my men while I lived. I'd care nothing for the price of labor and the length of hours. I'd make my own price and I would endeavor to have my name the best word in the dictionaries of my men, and I imagine my grave would be kept sweet with flowers and bathed by the tears of grateful mothers.

I KNOW of other actresses greater than Mabel Taliaferro, but I can think of no other who could have vested the part of seventeen-year-old Madeleine, in "SPRINGTIME," her latest play, with more charm, beauty and appeal. Suggestive of Maude Adams in many ways, this young actress is gifted with a gratifying dramatic *naïveté* that never for a single moment allows her to be infected with the most dangerous of histrionic germs, overacting. As a result, her performance gets where the performances of so many other players stop—at the heart. She does not command smiles and tears; they answer her of their own accord. She is simply and unaffectedly splendid. She just can't help it.

"SPRINGTIME," written by Tarkington and Wilson, who are becoming to the jointly made drama what Montgomery and Stone are to the double-jointly made dance show, is a play of Louisiana in 1815. In execution it is more like an animated series of fine oil paintings than drama. Madeleine, the daughter of De Valette, has been betrothed by her father in her infancy to Raoul de Valette, his cousin, who is getting on toward the sunset years of life. The young girl, knowing naught of love, takes this betroth-

al as a matter of inevitable course, and is awakened out of her unworldly loveless siesta only when she and a boyish American named Steele are suddenly brought face to face. She sees the color of the wind in his cheeks, the color that faded years ago from the face of the pale, gray man her father has picked for her husband. She feels the electricity of his touch. She realizes Youth. "I love you," she tells the boy in honest, vibrant innocence. "And I love you, too," he replies. Such is the dreamy story, as fragile as frosting on wedding cake, yet as sweet. No strident melodrama, no ruined female, no blatant flamboyancy. If you are fond of Theodore Kremer in his most violent moments, you may not care for "SPRINGTIME." If you care for Barrie with his "Little Minister" and his "Peter Pan"—and who does not?—you will love it. In either case, Frederic Thompson's magnificently colored production will give your eyes a treat. "SPRINGTIME" has set the New Theater a swift pace.

AFTER witnessing "THE MAN WHO OWNS BROADWAY," one is prompted to ask whether George Cohan did not write the Civil War. The two bear a suspiciously strong resemblance to each other in point of noise. To be perfectly fair, however, it must be admitted that in "THE MAN WHO OWNS BROADWAY" the noise is a little bit louder. But out of the din of battle, the musketry of quicksteps and the artillery of lingerie, there rises Raymond Hitchcock, who drowns out the Cohan bing with his own yellow bang, who teases humor out of every line and leads the Cohanimated chorus on to victory. The play is a musical version of the same author's "Popularity," that did not live up to its title when produced at Wallack's several seasons ago. What there is of a story concerns the love of a society bud for a matinee idol and of the battering down of parental opposition until the bud becomes an orange blossom. In the course of the story a villainous female, weighing about eighty-two

pounds, seeks to poison the mind of the girl against the actor by telling her he has a wife and four children in Denver. Later, when the girl accuses him of this, the actor looks at her in astonishment and then exclaims indignantly: "Four children! No, sir—no-o-o siree! I only played Denver *one* night!"

Hitchcock is as funny as ever in the role of Sidney Lyons, the droll stage light; and Flora Zabelle, as the girl in love with one of the stars, which fact she chronicles chromatically, affords him a very pretty foil.

THE triangle has once more been added to the season's dramatic geometry, this time in a play of Alaska by Henry D. Carey, called "TWO WOMEN AND THAT MAN." It is a very old-fashioned triangle, this—one man and two women. Nowadays the eternal triangle is more often apt to be one man, one woman and not enough money. And the square of the dollar hypotenuse, believe it, is equal to more than the squares of the other two sides.

The Carey play came to the Majestic Theater after "A Citizen's Home" had finally pulled down its shades. Its story is one of the sort usually described as "strong," the kind of story we have learned to expect from a certain class of writers who have left-tackle builds and wear soft collars, the kind of story with "red blood" smeared all over it and with an unsteam-heated country for its *locale*.

They are all the same, these "brute strength" yarns. You can read them by looking at the frontispiece.

"TWO WOMEN AND THAT MAN" is a strong play only in the quotation-marked sense of its theme. It may be most aptly characterized as a stew of "The Wolf," "The Squaw Man" and "The Royal Mounted" after a recipe in A. H. Wood's cook book. The result is a melodramatic *purée*, given what appetizing flavor it possesses, if you will overlook the execrable pun, by a *soupçon* of originality toward the finish, when the tangle in

the plot is unraveled by an Indian, who, speaking in his own tongue through an interpreter, clears the hero of the charge of the murder of the wife who has deserted him. The attempt to introduce atmosphere and color is carried into the auditorium of the theater, which is perfumed with the odor of fresh cut pine. Consequently, the Majestic Theater is to be strongly recommended if you have a cold in the head.

SPEAKING of colds, Augustus Thomas is becoming so intensely psychological that I will wager he cures his by menthol suggestion. His most recent play, "THE HARVEST MOON," produced at the Garrick Theater, is like a dramatization of one of Professor Munsterberg's Harvard examination papers. Beside it, "The Witching Hour" seems like a simple little high school lecture on the subject. In the latter play Mr. Thomas merely attempted to handle a pistol with psychology; in his latest play he handles several big canons—laws of the power of mental suggestion, negative insinuation, the influences of color and surroundings on persons, hypnosis by repetitive intimation and the healing of effect by the exploding of cause. There is not the slightest doubt in the world that "THE HARVEST MOON" is a play to make audiences think, but just what they will think only the unpsychological gentleman in the box office can eventually determine.

The story of the play has to do with a highly emotional young girl, Dora Fullerton, who is supposed to be "influenced" into a nervous, vacillating state of self-doubt by the constant repetition of the alleged fact that her mother, as one of the critics has put it, had cultivated other things than her voice in Paris when she left her husband to follow an operatic career. Among these other things was a Frenchman, who had acted as a father to Dora, although, as the reader may have guessed, the latter was scarcely old enough at the time to realize the Gallic gentleman's chivalry. As an

indirect result, Dora is subsequently led to believe that her mother's husband, with whom she is living, is her parent. It is a case of a wise child who knows its own father, you see.

When the play begins, Dora has expressed her determination to go on the stage, and is assured by her should-have-been father's sister and friends that, if she does, she will surely go the way of her mother. The girl, however, has made up what mind Mr. Thomas has allowed her and, on the advice of Monsieur Vavin, a scientist-dramatist, sticks to her decision. She begins rehearsals in her playwright lover's drama, but, at the second psychological moment, is again mentally seduced by wicked negative suggestion and is made to believe that, if she remains in the cast, she will act not wisely but too badly with the handsome leading man. This fear for herself is an echo of what has been dinned into her about her boulevardizing mother. She leaves the company on the eve of the production of the play, but returns after Vavin has photographically developed the negative suggestion before her eyes by making a well man feel sick merely by repeating to him that he is looking badly.

At this point, just when it is beginning to appear that Mr. Thomas is about to abandon psychology for some fine drama of his good old "Arizona" blend, the play shoots off at another scientific tangent. The play in the play has been a failure. Vavin invites Dora and her dramatist lover to his apartments and proceeds to explain to the latter that his play went wrong because he had disregarded the color of his settings. Vavin expounds the Spencerian theory of the influence on the emotions of different colors. He bathes the room in red light, makes Dora and her lover go through a scene that had been done before in a different light and convinces them that the improvement is due to the glow, which induces a feeling of affectionate contentment. Secondly, he experiments with yellow, and finally, in the beams

of the real harvest moon shining through the window, he makes them go through a passionate love scene from the playwright's drama. Gradually, the amative influence of the moon, as well as that of several glasses of wine the playwright has drunk, exerts itself, and the lovers fall into each other's arms in earnest. Somehow or other, I attributed this more to the influence of the liquor than to the psychological lunar influence. Love, despite Vavin, is the child of Wine and Music. The Moon is the godfather. It only christens the love that has been born. The play ends with the disclosure that the Frenchman is Dora's father, that his alliance with her mother had been legal and that, consequently, the negatively suggestive Mrs. Grundy had no true grounds for divorcing herself from the truth.

George Nash as Vavin is glorious, and Adelaide Nowak, as Dora, is fully as good as anyone the playwright could have chosen for the part. There is a bit of dialogue in the play that I should dearly love to understand. "My first play has not been very successful, you know," remarks the young dramatist to Vavin. "Never mind," rejoins the latter, pointing to a chafing dish, out of which he is serving crabs; "you will soon be in the Newburgh class." I imagine it has something to do with psychology, but, aside from that possibility, I confess that I fail to comprehend it even epigrammatically. "THE HARVEST MOON," celestially speaking, will owe more credit for its run to its star, Mr. Nash, than to its author. As for the latter, his enviable position as a leader among our native dramatists, and his exquisite compositions which have earned that title for him lead us to hope he will soon forsake scientific themes for the kind that first won him the plaudits of America. Mr. Frohman could not have provided Mr. Thomas with a finer production. Still, that's the way this manager always does things.

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN'S series of operas at popular prices at the Manhat-

tan came to an end with the close of October. The laudatory innovation of this impresario of everything under the border lights from Annette to Aida, from the torso tremolos of the Princess Rajah to the tonsil tremolos of the Princess Cavalieri, should not be passed by without a further word of praise. The operatic and the dramatic stages are sisters. The glittering gems of the former cannot fail to dazzle the admirers of the latter at close view. Popular prices, like rented opera glasses, may not be fashionable, but the view that may be had through both of them is just as good.

In "THE BUILDER OF BRIDGES," Alfred Sutro's latest play, Kyrle Bellew, the most shiny of the set of drawing-room role actors called "polished," has more the air of a bridge player than a bridge builder. The leading character is a construction engineer who, to judge from the array of photographs of bridges on the walls of his office, has made a slam on every river trick east and west of Suez. It is difficult, indeed, to picture the black cord creator of the elegant Voysin, the immaculately garbed Raffles, the once tear-voiced Romeo in such a role—until you have seen him. But, when you have, you will realize that a stretch of the imagination was uncalled for. Bellew has not forsaken Bellew for Guy Bates Post. The latter, in the recent Fiske production of Rupert Hughes's play, "The Bridge," looked and acted the part of a bridge maker to the life. Bellew, in braided attire of the latest mode, looks and acts Bellew. He has not attempted to span the chasm. Which, however, is undoubtedly satisfactory to the great number of his admirers, who would be shocked if their idol conveyed in any play at any time even the faintest aroma of overalls.

The play, through the prestige of such names as Sutro, Bellew and Mrs. Thomas Whiffen, will unquestionably enjoy a prolonged vogue of popularity.

It has become the invariable custom of writers on the theater to compare any scene of cumulatively incisive cross-questioning that slowly batters down secret barriers to a dénouement with the tense, unrelenting verbal cannonade with which Sir Daniel Carteret lays bare the deceit of Mrs. Dane in Henry Arthur Jones's masterful play. The reviewers did not overlook the obvious opportunity for the comparison in the case of the most dramatic scene in Henri Bernstein's "ISRAEL," now being presented at the Criterion. For once, however, the comparison was fair. The French dramatist has built up a terraced climax that, for gradually expanding dramatic emotionalism and for final heart thrust, is quite the peer of the scene that has stood for years as a critical standard. Curious, though, is it not, how all these "Mrs. Dane" scenes lead to the final disclosure that there has been a man in the case?

Edwin Arden, Graham Browne and Constance Collier interpret the leading parts in the drama, which will be of interest chiefly to those who are interested in a theme such as it exploits.

In the sight of such gorgeous stage pictures as are shown in "HEROD," in the splendid sweep of its panoramic crash of color and the Tissotian tones of its living paintings, the pen of the critic dips thrice into the inkwell for further superlatives. I doubt whether a more magnificently caparisoned production has ever made its way to the American stage. To have thought of producing Stephen Phillips's poetic tragedy in this country, where the spirit of the Moulin Rouge, at least theatrically, is preferred to the spirit of Stratford-on-Avon, required a stubborn steadfastness of hopeful purpose.

To have realized the production of "HEROD" as William Faversham has, requires that he be given all the praise that is his due. He is to be congratulated. It is a fine effort.

"A DOLL'S HOUSE"—WITH A FOURTH ACT

By H. L. MENCKEN

ONCE upon a time a Norwegian critic named John Paulsen encountered the late Henrik Ibsen in the Cafe Luitpold, at Munich, and invited him to make answer to the following question:

"In your play, 'A Doll's House,' you show us how Nora Helmer, the heroine, rebels against the terms of her marriage. Her husband, Torvald Helmer, is an exemplary husband and loves her sincerely, but it dawns on her one day that this love of his is not much different from that which a man feels for his dog. She is, in a word, not a life partner, to be consulted and respected, but a mere plaything, to be fondled in idle hours. When Nora discovers this she packs her clothes and departs from the house, leaving her husband and her three children behind. She will not return, she says, until she is able to command, not only Helmer's tolerant liking, but also his spontaneous respect. Well, now, what I want to know is this: Does she ever really return?"

Ibsen, pondering deeply, lifted the lid of his stein, and after the diligent waiter had seen to his needs, replied substantially as follows:

"God knows! As for me, I can only guess. Maybe she goes caroming into moral anarchy and becomes a roving circus woman. Maybe, on the contrary, she gets homesick for her children next day, and goes back to Torvald on any terms he chooses to make. I'm sure I don't know. It is the business of a playwright merely to ask the

question. Let every man answer it for himself."

So much for Ibsen. David Graham Phillips, the American, has more courage—and perhaps more ingenuity. That is to say, his new novel, "THE HUNGRY HEART" (Appleton, \$1.50), tells anew the story of "A Doll's House," but with the addition of the fourth act that Ibsen refused to attempt. We see Nora and Torvald in their home, and we see the growth of Nora's unrest and its culmination in open rebellion; and then we see the consequences of that rebellion—her philosophy of individualism put to the bitter test and its final disappearance in a compromise with the stern facts of existence. She comes home a sadder and a wiser wife. It is not that she loses faith in herself, but that she learns the great truth—greater than all others because it is its own only exception—that nothing is ever absolutely right and nothing is ever absolutely wrong.

It may be said at once that Mr. Phillips has written a book of assertive and unmistakable merits. There is rugged earnestness in it—the earnestness of a man who has thought out his ideas, to five places of decimals, before setting pen to paper—but it is very far from a tract. The author does not preach; he lets his characters tell their own story, contenting himself with the effort to make them credible and alive. In the case of the wife he has succeeded admirably. She is as real as Evelyn Innes or Sister Carrie, and that reality be-

longs to her, not only as an individual, but also, in some sense, as a type. She represents, in brief, exactly that combination of formless aspiration and vague discontent which marks the average American woman of the middle class. As she says herself, she has been educated too much and too little—too much to make her the complacent toy of a man, and too little to make her his free equal.

The other characters have less roundness, obviously because Mr. Phillips is less interested in them. The husband, only too often, is merely Torvald Helmer speaking English. He seldom strikes the note of nationality, and the note of universality almost never. As for the Other Man, he seems a gratuitous intruder. The story would have been better without him; he is no more than a god from the machine, dropping in at convenient times to help translate thought into act. His very name—Basil Gallatin—is grotesquely theatrical and irritating. The other characters are few and have no real part in the transactions that matter. From curtain to curtain, the drama is played out in the soul of the wife alone.

Several critics, in reviewing "*THE HUNGRY HEART*," have taken Mr. Phillips to task for the sin of monotony. He is obsessed, they aver, by the sex problem, and in each successive book presents anew a wife at war with the biblical theory of marriage. It seems to me that, even if this were true, it would not be a valid objection. If you examine, in fact, the books of any novelist, great or small, you will find the same dominance of one master idea. That idea is a key to the author's philosophy of life; it indicates his view of things in general by revealing the particular thing that he thinks most significant. In the books of George Moore the basic motive is always the eternal strife between faith and facts, the spirit and the flesh. In the books of Joseph Conrad it is the utter meaninglessness of life, the remoteness of first causes, the inexplicable vagaries of fate. Again, in Thackeray, it is the deep rooted human impulse to play a

part, to pretend, to dissemble, to wear a mask. Mr. Phillips, it seems to me, is fully entitled to his point of view. The test of his work is to be sought, not in the orthodoxy of that point of view, but in the accuracy of the observations he makes from it. In "*THE HUNGRY HEART*" he has made a good book, not a flawless masterpiece by any means, but still a book full of insight, feeling for form and clear writing. Let us hope that its faults are counterbalanced by its promise; that it marks his final retirement from the vain trade of manufacturing best sellers.

"*MARTIN EDEN*," by Jack London (*Macmillan, \$1.50*), is a combination of incredible biography and undigested philosophy. It tells the story of a literary genius, and the press notices give currency to the notion that, in more than one place, Mr. London is his own hero, but I have not found that hero either interesting or lifelike. He starts out as an ignorant sailor, acquires an education in record breaking time and then takes the reading world by storm. But the success that he has longed for gives him no joy when it comes. Sober reflection makes him doubt its genuineness. Is there any real understanding in the public's homage, or only mob emotionalism? The problem baffles him, and he puts an end to its insistence by suicide. A labored and tedious novel, with a good deal of bad writing in it.

"*THE WHITE PROPHET*," by Hall Caine (*Appleton, \$1.50*), rises superior to all estimate and analysis. It is a mammoth tome of over six hundred closely printed pages, in which every conceivable problem of human life is disposed of. The canvas is a thousand miles wide, with its bottom edge in the waters under the earth and its top in the empyrean heights. There is room for a whole race of people—to wit, the race of modern Egyptians. How they rise against the domineering English and how, in the end, they work out their destiny—this is the main story. Engrafted upon it are tales of love,

honor and simple faith. It is magnificent, and if you like Hall Caine you won't stop to inquire if it is also art.

"*STRADELLA*," the last of the late F. Marion Crawford's romances to see the light (*Macmillan*, \$1.50), is a brisk and diverting variation upon the story of Friedrich von Flotow's half-forgotten opera of the same name. The Venetian magnifico who used to warble so divinely in the opera reappears in the book, and he has the same beautiful and rebellious ward, whose heart goes out as ever to our old friend, Alessandro Stradella, hero and music master. But let it not be supposed for a moment that Mr. Crawford's tale is a slavish copy of Flotow's antique libretto. Far from it, indeed! In the first place, the names of the magnifico and his ward are changed from Bassi and Leonora to Pignaver and Ortensia, and, in the second place, the course of Alessandro's true love has a host of new and ingenuous impediments. Pignaver, like Bassi, wants to marry Leonora-Ortensia himself, and so sends a pair of ruffians to rescue her from the fond embraces of Alessandro; but the ruffians of Crawford (borrowing something from "Erminie," perhaps) are far more humorous and villainous than those of Flotow, for after taking Pignaver's retainer, they take another from the rascally nephew of a cardinal, and so poor Leonora-Ortensia is shanghaied twice. But in the end all is well, and the lovers are happy. An excellent story to read on a dull Sunday or in jail. It has movement, color, comedy, plausibility and an air.

"*NORTHERN LIGHTS*," by Sir Gilbert Parker (*Harpers*, \$1.50), is a collection of seventeen short tales of the Canadian Northwest, ranging in merit from tales that are very good indeed to tales that could scarcely be much worse. To the first category belongs the opening story, "A Lodge in the Wilderness," a keen and sympathetic study of the soul of a white man under barbarism. Of the bad stories, the best example, perhaps, is that called "A

Man, a Famine and a Heathen Boy," a grotesque imitation of Kipling's early "Plain Tales" manner. Most of the stories occupy a ground midway between the heights and the depths. They have a certain ingenuity and they show a certain facility, but the act of reading them is not to be counted among the stimulating intellectual privileges.

A book of much greater draught and beam is "*THE SOUTHERNER*," by "Nicholas Worth," whoever he may be (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50). Here we have the simple but engrossing account of one strong man's encounters with the appalling sentimentality which marked all Southern thought, though in slowly lessening degree, during the thirty years following the Civil War. The wounds of that great conflict, far from breaking the Southerner's pride, only made it more austere and inflexible. Fiercely resenting the heartless exploitation of his conqueror, he arrived, by an easy psychological process, at a violent hatred of his conqueror's practical philosophy and undoubted efficiency. The result was a lamentable exaltation of romance. The professional veteran, with his bloody shirt, became a demi-god, *ex officio*, no matter what his actual failings as a man; and there was a vast reverence for orthodox theologians, mob orators and other such vapid rhapsodists. It took a lot of hard and thankless work by the younger generation to break down the old habits of mind, but broken down they were at last, and then began that rapid industrial progress which is making the South a mighty empire today. The old civilization was beautiful, but time had rumbled over it. This book is the story of one of the men who strove to build up a new civilization upon its ruins. It is the earnest, passionate, often extravagant story of a propagandist, and more than once his violence seems even more savage and even less intelligible than that of his opponents; but, all the same, it is a story well told and well worth reading by all Americans in general—for senti-

mentality is not found in the South alone—and by all Southerners in particular.

THE Zenda romance will not down. Here are two more—"THE MAN IN THE TOWER," by Rupert S. Holland (*Lippincott*, \$1.50), and "THE GAME AND THE CANDLE," by Eleanor M. Ingram (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50). In each there is the same delectable blend of love, honor and adventure; in each a magnificent American plays a heroic part, and on each there is a cover so alluring that it will draw the money out of your pocket. So why praise them? The taste for Zenda romances is a vice perhaps, but, like all other vices, it serves to make its devotees happy.

IT is pleasant to welcome every new printed play that comes along, for printed plays are all too scarce in this, our fair republic. The German and French dramatists get into type almost before they get into rouge and three-sheet, and so do the more important men of England, but on this side of the water a great fear of the printing press seems to afflict the play makers. No doubt this fear was engendered in the old days of carefree piracy, when a play printed in New York on Monday was certain to be played in Peoria and Kalamazoo on Thursday, without a by-your-leave or a dollar of royalty. But those days belong to history, for an efficient copyright law now gives the author protection, and the provincial pirate is no more. In the course of time, it is likely, our American dramatists will hear of this law, and then the presses will begin to disgorge dramas as they now disgorge romances.

"THE MELTING POT," by Israel Zangwill (*Macmillan*, \$1.25), is one of the plays that have lately got between covers. The United States of America is the pot of Mr. Zangwill's dream. Here, he says, come the diverse and antagonistic races of Europe, and here they are all melted down into clear and homogeneous metal. In witness whereof he gives us a Jewish hero, the son of martyrs massacred at Kishinef, and a

Russian heroine, the daughter of the man who instigated the massacre. In Russia a bloody chasm would separate the two, but in America it closes up. Their lives begin anew; no longer Jew and Russian, they start again as free Americans.

As a tract Mr. Zangwill's drama is exceedingly impressive, but as a stage play it suffers by its very virtues as a tract. That is to say, it is hopelessly dialectic, and its people are tiresomely introspective. The things that the hero and heroine do are swallowed up by the things that they incessantly say. They are constantly explaining their motives; they are engaged, without rest, in sociological and anthropological debates. Time was when such debates were heard by English speaking audiences with keen attention; in that time Shakespeare wrote "Hamlet." In some future age, no doubt, the same taste will prevail again, and then Ibsen's "Little Eyolf" will hold the boards for months and "The Melting Pot" will become a classic. Meanwhile, it is pleasant to have this earnest little drama to read, for in the library it seems to lose many of the faults which mark it on the stage. It is, indeed, a play for reading rather than for seeing, a play by a man who is far more novelist and controversialist than dramatist.

ANOTHER printed drama of the moment is "THE GREAT DIVIDE," by William Vaughn Moody (*Macmillan*, \$1.25). This piece has held the boards for several years, and with enormous success. The reason is not far to seek, for it appears in the very first act—an act of utterly overwhelming drama. But the play is not all thrill and desperate encounter, for Mr. Moody has got into it an idea as complex and as debatable as Mr. Zangwill's. In setting it forth, however, he has employed the method of the dramatist, whereas Mr. Zangwill has employed the method of the novelist. If you would understand the difference between these two methods, you could do no better than study the two plays side by side.

A BLANK verse drama called "YZ-DRA," by Louis V. Ledoux (*Putnam*, \$1.25), is also on the month's list. The heroine of this strange composition is a Punjab maiden who has been fed from infancy upon poisons. These deadly henbanes and poppies have so permeated her system that her very kiss is certain death. Therefore, when Alexander the Great, after conquering Persia, comes roaring down into the Punjab, what more natural than for Poros, the Emperor, to send her to Alexander's camp, to woo him, charm him and kiss him to death? This tale is told in three acts of exceedingly vapid verse.

IN the old days diplomatic ladies were a chattering and scribbling lot, and their multitudinous journals and memoirs kept the chancelleries of Europe in a constant shiver. But that was long, long ago, and today they write no more. Even "My Dear Maria" has held her peace. What a rattling chronicle of international whispering and wire pulling she could pen if she would!

But it is a poor rule that has no exceptions; and behold! An exception to this one at once appears in the person of Mrs. Sarah Pike Conger, wife of that plain spoken, hard working, efficient Mr. Conger who was American minister to China in the days of the Boxers. Mrs. Conger has little in common, however, with Metternich's Pauline and the other grand dames of the old school. She is, I take it, a middle-aged lady who finds her highest happiness in her home, with her grandchildren about her. And yet fate, in one of its ironic moods, transported her to beleaguered Peking, and made her a leading figure in the most terrific melodrama of modern times.

In her quiet way, she gets a good deal of the hot flavor of this melodrama into her book, "LETTERS FROM CHINA" (*McClurg*, \$4.00). It is not history, but the raw material of history, a rambling record of impressions and emotions. One derives from it a vivid notion of what the day's toil and the

night's alarms meant to those God-forsaken foreigners in the British Legation—what their fears were when their yellow foes came storming on in the dark, and what their joy was when the dawn of a memorable day brought the rattle of Chaffee's guns. But even in all that turmoil there were dull hours, and when they came Mrs. Conger wrote home to her daughter, her sister and her friends. The letters thus written make up her book.

A hundred intimate glimpses of the Chinese court illuminate the main story. No other white woman was on such good terms with the late Empress Dowager as Mrs. Conger. They met often, and they got on famously. Here we have a close range portrait of the magnificent old heathen, a portrait that should help the historian of the future to see something of the hidden causes behind the great awakening of China.

IN "GREEN GINGER," by Arthur Morrison (*Stokes*, \$1.50), we come upon the author of "Tales of Mean Streets" in sportive mood. There are sixteen stories in the book, and in all of them the farcical element is to the fore. The first story recounts the adventures of a Small Investor who puts a hundred pounds into a circus. When dividends fail to be forthcoming on schedule he demands his money back, and the humorous Barnum at the head of the outfit sends him a caged tiger on account. Not until this tiger has turned the Small Investor's hair gray is it discovered that he is really a drunken Irishman in a tiger's hide. The humor in these tales, it must be confessed, is not of the highest class. Only too often it recalls the painfully artificial buffoonery of those obscure Congreves who write for the barber shop weeklies.

"THE UTTERMOST FARTHING," by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes (*Kennedy*, \$1.25) is a novel with one smashing situation, to wit: An American gentleman leaves Paris with the wife of a dear old friend for a week of carefree dalliance in the country. The pair fall asleep in their

railway compartment. When the American awakes he finds that his companion is dead! Problem: How is he to get away without allowing the husband, or anyone else, to suspect that he was with her?

Well, he does it. I am not going to tell you how. You must read the book yourself.

"THE NEW NEW YORK," by John C. Van Dyke, with more than one hundred drawings by Joseph Pennell (*Macmillan, \$3.50*), is no mere picture book, but a serious attempt to set forth the might and majesty of Marvelous Manhattan. Professor Van Dyke's text, far from being subordinate to the pictures, is a good deal more satisfying than the latter, which are sometimes marked by exceedingly bad drawing. In a number of them the buildings seem to be falling over, chiefly to the right, and in others there is evidence of haste and carelessness. It is only fair to say, however, that these are in the minority, and that the collection, as a whole, shows some of Mr. Pennell's most interesting work. He is at his best, perhaps, when he leaves the skyscrapers and visits the rivers and the bay. His sketch of Lower Broadway misses entirely the grim magnificence of that canyon, but up among the castles of the West Side he is at home. His attempts to achieve atmospheric effects, mist and rain, are remarkably successful.

Professor Van Dyke writes as one who knows New York and loves it.

"WITS, BEAUX AND BEAUTIES OF THE GEORGIAN ERA," by John Fyvie (*Lane, \$4.00*), is a welcome book if only on account of its long and excellent chapter on the life and dramas of Samuel Foote, playwright, mimic, *bon vivant* and crusader. Foote was one of the most remarkable figures of the eighteenth century, and yet he seems to be forgotten utterly. In twenty years but one of his plays has been given in the United States, and then it was at but a single performance, and by amateurs. They are certainly

worthy of a better fate, for there is the true spirit of comedy in every line of them. Foote, like George Bernard Shaw, delighted to stir up the animals. He put real personages upon the stage, and had memorable bouts with the play censor. He was, in his day, a public figure as conspicuous as Garrick, and even old Dr. Johnson, who disliked him, was forced to admit him the first of wits. Adversity overtook him in his old age, and implacable enemies killed him. A hero who deserves a full length biography! Why doesn't Mr. Fyvie undertake it?

"MEN, THE WORKERS" (*Doubleday Page, \$2.00*) is a collection of the late Henry Demarest Lloyd's speeches and essays on the relations between capital and labor. Mr. Lloyd's rank in the war upon opulence was much like that of Colonel Ingersoll in the war upon dogmatism. That is to say, he was not a critic, but a spellbinder. His discourses cast no new light upon the staggering problems they presumed to discuss; they were essentially harangues for friendly and emotional, but far from reflective, audiences. Considered merely as harangues, no one can deny their enormous effectiveness. They were straightforward and electric appeals—to the stomach as much as to the mind. They put resolution and courage into the hearts of the workers, and they put Mr. Lloyd himself into the Valhalla of Labor's gods.

ALL praise for the excellent reprint of "KING LEIR," in the Shakespeare Classics series (*Duffield*). It was upon this old play, first issued in 1594, that Shakespeare founded his greatest tragedy. Not a single copy of the edition of 1594 remains, but there are several known copies of the reprint of 1605, and the title page of one of these is reproduced in photogravure as a frontispiece to the present volume. The introduction and notes, by Dr. Sidney Lee, author of the best "Life of Shakespeare" ever written, are all that could be desired, and in printing and binding the book is perfect. Too often the

charm of the old dramas, when they come to be reprinted, is spoiled by the pedantry of editors, but Dr. Lee, for all his learning, has nothing of the college professor about him.

ONCE UPON A TIME—

by Carl Holliday.

(*Broadway Pub. Co.*, \$1.00)

A dozen fairy tales, done with no little grace and charm.

QUESTIONS AT ISSUE IN OUR ENGLISH SPEECH—

by Edwin W. Bowen, Ph.D.

(*Broadway Pub. Co.*, \$1.25)

A cheerful blend of philological lore and entertaining writing. Chapters on spelling, slang, Britishisms, Americanisms and pronunciation.

THE JEW IN ENGLISH LITERATURE—
by Edward N. Calisch.

(*Bell*, \$1.50)

A scholarly and excellent work in a new field. Very few Jewish authors have escaped Dr. Calisch's wide reading.

THE CONFESSIONS OF A CON MAN—
Edited by Will Irwin.

(*Huebsch*, \$1.00)

Not fiction, but veracious history. A book of rare humor and human interest.

THE TOLL OF THE SEA—
by Roy Norton.

(*Appleton*, \$1.50)

A thrilling tale of earthquakes, tidal waves and other cosmic mis-haps. Huge ocean steamers are sucked into watery abysses by stupendous magnets. Imaginative scientists play the devil. Jules Verne himself could give no better show for the money.

HAPPY HAWKINS—

by Robert Alexander Wason.

(*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50)

A farcical sketch of life in the western country, set forth in rather dubious dialect.

IN WHALING DAYS—

by Howland Tripp.

(*Little-Brown*, \$1.50)

Chapters about the heroes and

common folks of old New Bedford. The worst of them have plenty of color, and the best are delightful.

SONGS FROM THE GARDEN OF KAMA—
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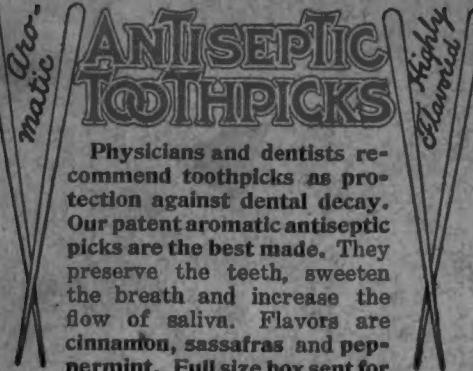
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